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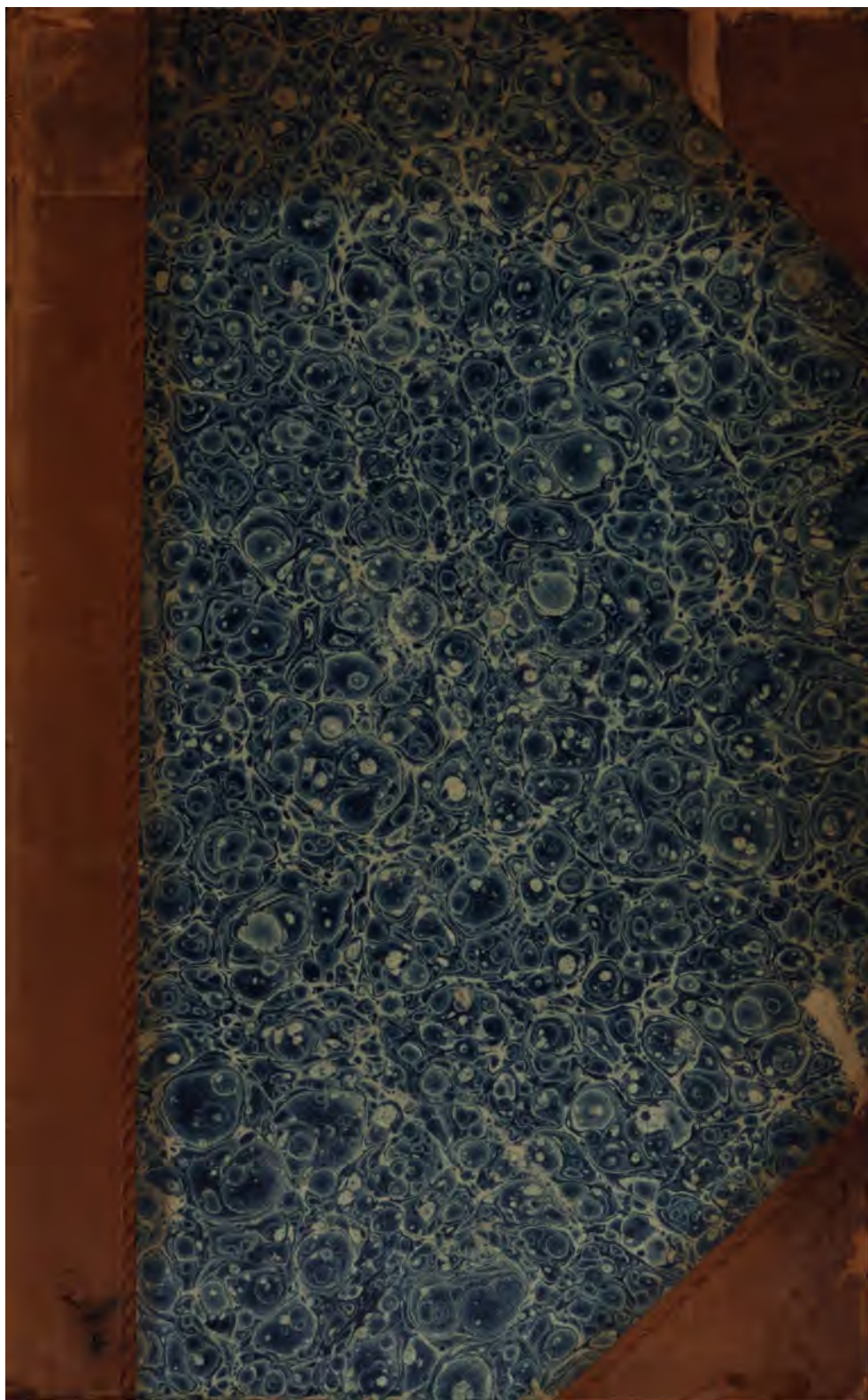
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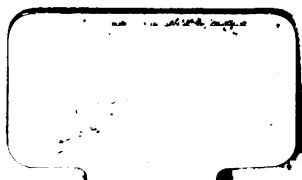
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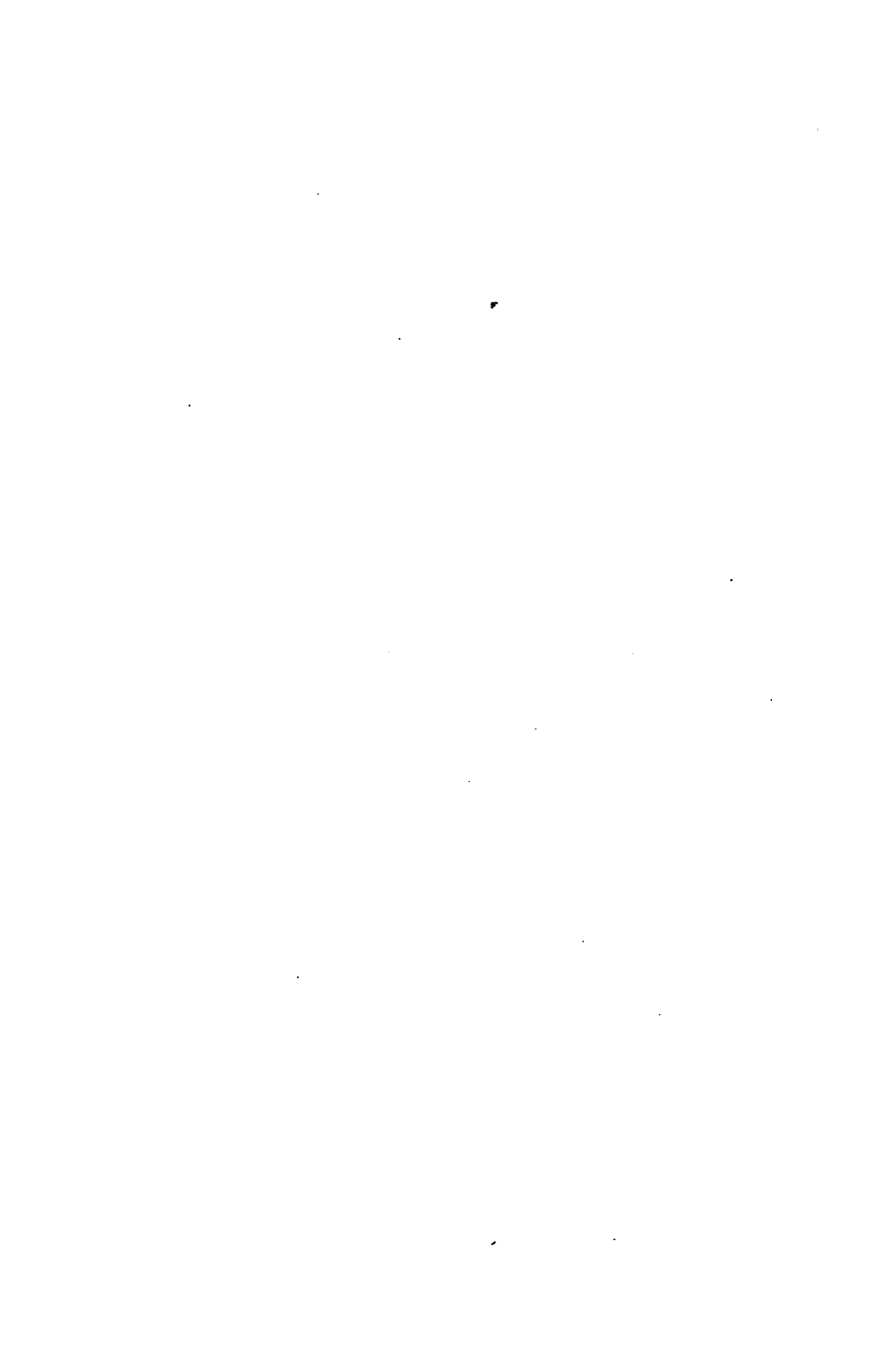
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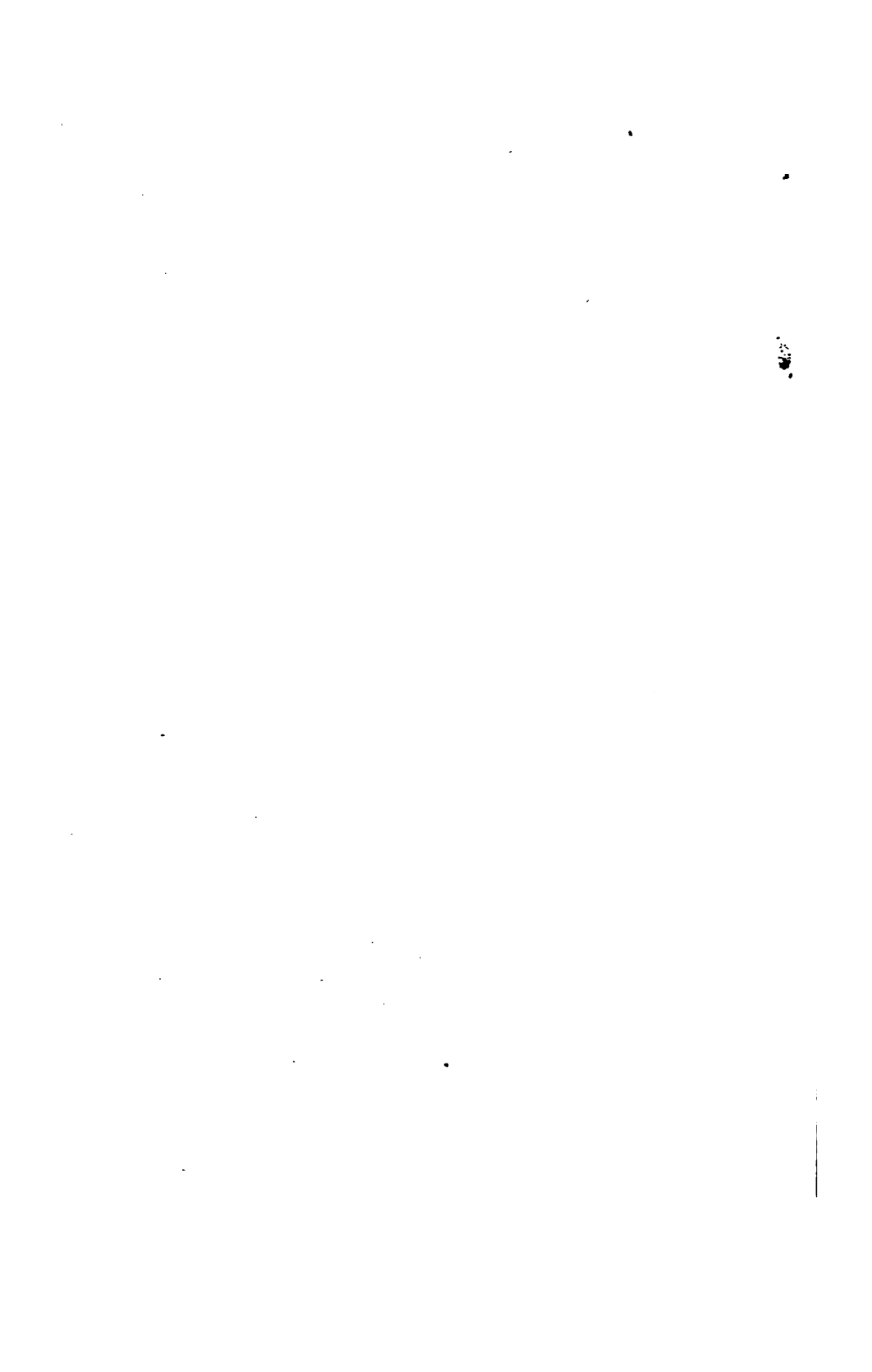


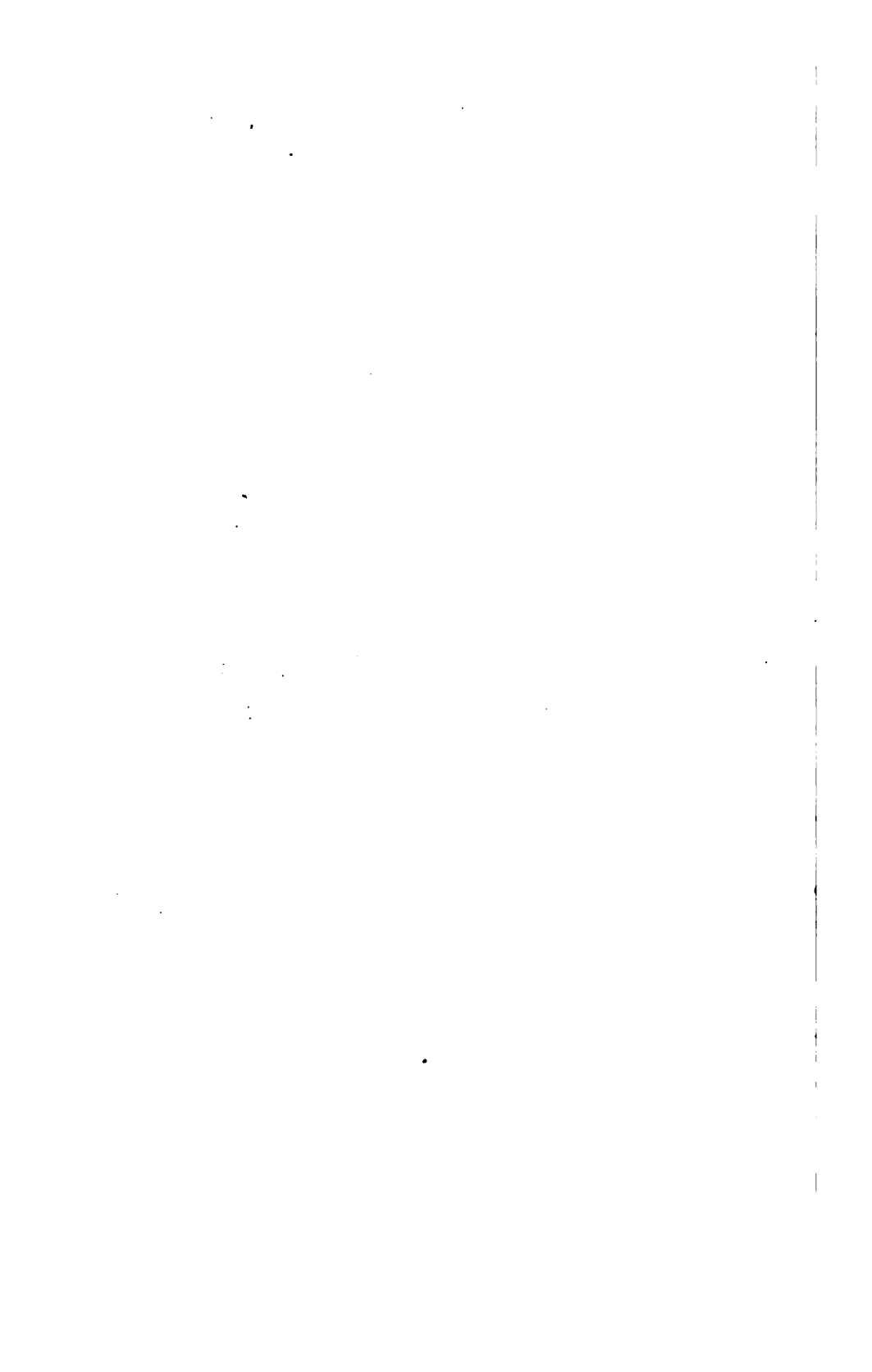
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Play.

THE

BROTHERS.

A Play,

IN FIVE ACTS.



"THE COUNTERFEIT PRESENTMENT OF TWO BROTHERS."—HAMLET.

LONDON:

SIMPKIN, MARSHALL AND CO.

MANCHESTER: SIMMS AND DINHAM.

MDCCCLIII.

MANCHESTER :
JOSEPH PRATT, PRINTER, BRIDGE STREET.

TO

MY MOTHER,

THIS SMALL TRIBUTE, THE FIRST PRODUCTION OF HER SON,

Is Dedicated,

WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF ARDENT AFFECTION,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS being the first publication on which the Author has ventured, it may be considered necessary to explain the circumstances under which it appears before the Public.

It is no hasty production; on the contrary, it is the result of the leisure hours which the Author has been enabled to snatch from the cares of business, and its composition has in this manner extended over a period of three years; yet, it may be that such detached opportunities have somewhat negatived the advantages that consecutive study might have given. It was no part of his intention to publish it, much less to submit it to the public, as an acting Drama; but the manuscript having found its way into the hands of MR. C. D. PITT, of the Theatre Royal, Manchester, through the well-intended, but perhaps too ardent zeal, of a friend, and that gentleman, after a careful perusal of it, having urgently persuaded the Author to revise and submit it to the public, he has been induced to comply. How far the public will reiterate the eulogium passed upon it by his friends, the Author does not presume to calculate; but should it meet with success, it will hereafter be his endeavour to merit increased approbation and reward, by a more polished and elaborate production.

SALFORD,
OCT. 1843.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

| | | |
|-------------|-------|----------------------------------|
| FERDINAND | . . . | <i>Duke of Messina.</i> |
| BERTRAND | . . . | <i>His Brother.</i> |
| ANTONIO | . . . | <i>Friend to Bertrand.</i> |
| GASTON | . . . | <i>Duke's Secretary.</i> |
| COSTELLA | . . . | <i>General of Palermo Army.</i> |
| BELLANO | . . . | <i>Officer of do.</i> |
| FRIAR PETER | . . . | |
| ROGERIO | . . . | <i>Attendant on FRIAR PETER.</i> |
| CAIUS | . . . | <i>Fool to CONSTANCIA.</i> |
| JACQUES | . . . | <i>Servant to do.</i> |

Courtiers, Soldiers, Servants, &c.

| | | |
|------------|-------|---|
| CONSTANCIA | . . . | <i>A Countess, in love with BERTRAND.</i> |
| MARGUERITE | . . . | <i>Cousin to do., in love with ANTONIO.</i> |
| ALICE | . . . | <i>Daughter to GASTON.</i> |

SCENE—*Messina and Environs, Sicily.*

THE BROTHERS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Country.*

Enter CAIUS and JACQUES, meeting.

Caius.—Ан, Jacques, where hast been?

Jacques. In search of thee!

Ca. Prithee, why?

Ja. I would consult with thee about our Lady, for to confess the truth, good master Caius, it has much puzzled me of late to guess her humour! Once she was a gay lady, and loved the court, and was merry, and laughed, and sang, and what not;—but now! she mopes and mopes, for all the world, like an owl in a cage; sees no society, is dull and silent, and as to a smile! I verily believe there has not been one on her face since her birthday was, when the tournament was held! What dost think, Caius?

Ca. That the wind has changed, and sits at another point!

Ja. How so?

Ca. Why, that 'twas south some two months back, and warm, and cheerful!—but now, 'tis north, and is gloomy, and cold. I see no further than a veer i' th' wind!

Ja. Why thou speak'st of women as though they were weathercocks.

Ca. And so in mood you'll find them! for they can shift and turn like them, and like them are governed by the idle wind caprice, as many a poor sighing swain could tell thee!

Ja. 'Tis strange!—our occupation's gone!—we have nought to do: thou art her fool, Caius, why dost not

make her laugh?—stir up thy jokes!—let thy tongue run wanton!—'twill be the salvation of her!

Ca. No, Jacques, thou art wrong!—thou speak'st without argument! Folly should never intrude upon the feelings when their pleasure rests in sadness!

Ja. What's then to be done?

Ca. First find the matter—then, the remedy!—for your true physician does consider well the locality o' th' disease, ere he prescribes!

Ja. Well! have we not so considered, and run up a catalogue of ills, master Caius, without hatching our thoughts to any end but to prove their barrenness?—thus, she is lonely! melancholy! grave! never smiles! but sighs often, and with a woful look she shakes her head, then sighs again!

Ca. Does she so! why this is the very head o' th' state, and from't may be gathered her infection!—she is lonely! then is she in thought!—melancholy!—which proves her thoughts be deep!—grave!—that they are of moment!—and that she never smiles but sighs often, shows her to be in love!

Ja. Love! [*shaking his head*] no! no! master Caius, it is not love that breeds such barren thought; for, under the rose, I've been in love a matter of a score of times, and never in one was I like my lady!—no! no! 'tis impossible!

Ca. Doubtful, but not impossible, I grant thee: her symptoms prove her to be deeply so!

Ja. It cannot be! for, see thee, good friend, love must have an object which to love, else 'tis not!—granted:—now who can my lady love? for of a truth my lady has seen no company since the tourney!

Ca. Then may we date its spring from that; but hold thee, has not Gaston, the Duke's secretary, been here with letters of proposal from the Duke?

Ja. Aye! twice, but my lady would not!

Ca. That would not is a whetstone, on which to sharp desire; in love, 'tis often met with, and he that gathereth roses must be content to prick his fingers! but get thee back to Grammont, and see thou bear'st thy understanding in thy eyes, that thou may'st omit nothing!

Ja. And whither goest thou?

Ca. To court! for, an' I stop here much longer, my

wit shall rust in its scabbard, and rust steel strikes no fire!

Ja. Well! Fare thee well, friend Caius!

Ca. Farewell!

[*Exeunt sep.*]

SCENE II.—*The Garden.*—*Grammont.*

Enter CONSTANCIA and MARGUERITE.

Mar. You have been rather hasty in't!
For how you could refuse the Duke, sweet Coz,
I must confess is past my comprehension!

Const. What! would'st have the tongue belie the heart,

And smile where it does hate?

Mar. Nay, you do consider 't wrongly!
Bethink you! 'twas the Duke who woo'd you,
Not a simple man!

Const. His letter told me so!—for that alone
I liked it not, and its very tone, such
As seemed imperative!—that, when I read,
Throughout I was reminded 'twas the Duke
Who bent so low as to solicit me,
And offer me the favor of his hand,
Not doubting my reply. Oh, he mistook!
A woman's heart yields not to wealth alone!
With me 'tis heart for heart!—and a true heart,
With poverty, were better, than to sit beside
A crowned head, and be called its queen,
If it did lack that heart!—
Nay!—I would sooner give 't to a beggar
Than stoop so low in dignity of spirit
As knuckle to such wooing!

Mar. Well! well! this is all most mighty fine,
But in my opinion, dearest Constance,
Your theory is better than the practice!
I like it not!—a Duke's a Duke!

Const. In such a case he should forget his rank!—
Put off all dignity!—and stand upon
The ground of his own merit, rather than
Think to lord it with his name!—for what is he?—

At best a simple man!—the meanest slave
That licks the dust where trod his heel, is that—
No more!

When God created man, He made but one,
And but one woman!—from which two alone
There sprang all that do now inhabit earth!—
Duke, noble, beggar, slave, alike do claim
The self-same origin!—Where is then the power
By which the great have their ascendancy?

It is not merit! as we daily see
Humbler of birth outdoing them in deeds!—
'Tis wealth! wealth! wealth!—that's their nobility!
The greatest of them all can worship that!

Oh Coz! were there a man could laugh at such,
And seek for power in merit only,
Him could I love!—but not such as the Duke!

Mar. And prithee, where, e'en in this motley world,
Would'st find one with such low ambition?

Const. I do not seek one! I am contented,
Even as I am—a simple maid!—
To tell my life-time out!

Mar. That's more, I promise you, than I am!
Now, I for my part, would not mind if there
Would twenty lovers swell my train, and then,
As to a Duke!—

Const. Well, what then?

Mar. Why, I only wish there would one try,
That's all!

Const. And would'st forget Antonio?

Mar. Why, no!—yet, Antonio is far away,
Mayhap may ne'er return, and two chances
Are better far than one!—and then again,
It would be a most capital practice!—
And should Antonio come back, he'd find me—

Const. What?—a truant heart?

Mar. Admirably versed in love, and quite pat,
In all its phrases!

But tell me, what does your reverence make
Of this same pastime—love?

Const. It is a lottery!—the wheel goes round
With many a blank, though but few prizes!—
Perchance we try it, and think our draw a prize!—
But after the visionary's passed,

Of love's probation—comes stern reality!—
 Black mortification fills our poor hearts,
 And all is lost!

Mar. Beshrew me, Cousin, but thou think'st not so;
 For sure am I, that heart is not so stern!
 Supposing, now, that after this preaching,
 One came of real worth to barter with you,
 Some youth of fortune and nobility!—
 I'll e'en suppose it was Lord Bertrand came,
 For he is both brave and noble!—
 Ah! thou startest now!—ah! surely, dear Coz,
 This mighty talk is not such gossamer
 As to be broken by a supposition!

Const. Did I start?

Mar. Aye, marry, did'st, and more!

Const. More?

Mar. The mantling blush that rose upon thy cheeks
 Told more than twenty starts!—nay—there again!

Const. 'Tis nothing!

Mar. Then nothing is a tell tale!
 And I would swear an oath, were I a knight,
 That nothing tells the truth!—thou lovest!—
 And Lord Bertrand is thy love!—nay, 'tis true!
 For nature's cunning hand upon thy cheeks
 Has writ it plainly!—so deny it not!

Const. I will not, for thou hast guessed most truly!
 I do love! and Lord Bertrand too!—since when
 I first beheld him at the tourney
 I have loved him!

Mar. And hast ne'er seen him since?

Const. No!—yes!—that is in my mind's eye,
 Where now he is, even as on that day,
 When first I saw him in the tented field,
 Encased in armour glittering in the sun,
 With nodding plume and helmet on his head,
 And lance in rest, and mounted on his steed,
 A jetty black, that proudly bore along,
 His noble form so graceful in his seat!—
 It was but thus, and only thus I saw him,
 And yet I loved him!—yea, I loved him more,
 The more I gazed!—
 And when he took his stand at the far end,
 Opposing in the lists, my heart grew sick,

For fear of him!—I could no longer look,
So turned away until the course was run,
And he proclaimed the conqueror!

Mar. Dost then truly love?

Const. Oh true!—most true!

My life has been but one long day of love
Since first I saw him!—one long prayer to Heaven
Offered for his welfare!—one desire
To serve him with my love!—then could I die!
But come, let's within!

Mar. And so the poor Duke must e'en go begging!
Well! well! this does account for it!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The Duke's Palace.*

DUKE seated on his throne.—COURTIER, &c.—*Music playing.*

Duke. Enough! enough! I have no pleasure in't!—
'Tis discord all!—such tumult's in my breast,
Which it doth rather raise than put to rest!
Oh love! what mad desire does fill my soul
At mention of thy name!—what heat now burns
Within this heart that makes my blood to boil,
And runs, like molten lead, through all my veins,
Kindling thy flame! How frenzied beats my pulse,
And leaps and throbs with hot'st impatience,
As if my very soul would burst its bounds
And 'scape to her it loves! Still must I wait,
And curb my passion more with reason's rein,
That I may better hope success!

Court. Don Gaston, my Lord!

Enter GASTON.

Duke. Friends, leave us. [*Exit COURTIER.*
Gaston, thou hast come in season!
My constant thoughts were with thee and my suit.
Say, how prosper'st?

Gaston. Indifferently, your highness!—
This will explain. [*giving him a letter.* DUKE reads.

Duke. How! what's this?—my own—unanswered!
Speak!—how is't?—what said she?

Gaston. Nothing.

Duke. Nothing!—Did she not read it?

Gaston. As a school-boy scans the task he hates,
When his superior awes him to it,
So did she read your highness' letter;—
Then closing 't slowly, she gave 't me back again!—
Saying, there was no answer requisite.

Duke. What!—did she then refuse me thus,
And without one word from thee?

Gaston. Nay, my lord! I did much importune her
To give me but one syllable in answer—
One little word—but she would no more!

Duke. Oh, thou tortur'st me!—I'll not believe it!
What! shall I, Messina's Duke, be scorned thus—
I, the very head o' th' state, her prince,
Be refused of a vassal?—oh no!—
It is impossible!—'tis monstrous!
To think that I should be denied by a woman!—
Why, the whole world would gape with wonder,
And point at me as one beneath a man!—
It is false!—thou hast garbled thy duty!—
I'll never believe it!

Gaston. [*aside*] Garbled or no, proud Duke,
I have a scheme shall humble thee!
I do believe, my lord, she is in love
Already, with another!

Duke. Another!—who?—let him look to it!
For, let me tell thee, Gaston,
I have set my heart upon this bauble,
And will win it, spite of all! Poor, poor bird!
Let me but clutch thee once, within this grasp,
Not all thy flutterings shall bid me then
To let thee go, ere I will call thee mine!

Gaston. My lord, bethink you!

Duke. I have bethought me! What! then,
Shall I fear a woman?—or, who?—her love?—
For, I do swear I fear him less than her,
Whoe'er he be!

Gaston. I do fear it is Lord Bertrand
Whom she loves!

Duke. How!—my brother?—has he then dared?

Gaston. Nothing, my lord!—he knows not of her choice!

Duke. How can she love him then?

Gaston. I do much fear it—yet, 'tis but surmise,
And as such only do I name it now—
My reason this:—I did, by accident,
How, I know not, mention your brother's name,
When, she did start, and o'er her face and neck
A crimson flush did spread, and her voice
Trembled in reply! From these signs alone
I take it she does love Lord Bertrand,
Yet certain am I that he knows it not!

Duke. 'Tis well!—let me bethink me!

[*bell tolls eight.*]

Gaston. Ah, I must away! it is the hour,
And should it bring success to that I hope,
Thou, proud Duke, shalt feel my power—mine!
Thou art my master, now!—it shall go hard
But I'll be thine ere midnight! [*aside.*]

Duke. Gaston, get thee to my brother;
Say, I would speak with him. [*Exit GASTON.*]
He does stand much upon his honour, so,
He shall have trial on't!—slave of his word!
It shall be seen, and let him only dare
Transgress so much as in one poor word,
He shall pay dearly for it! Meantime,
To curb the mettle of my soul,
Rein in its pride to grovelling nature,
That I may seem the open-hearted friend,
By telling him in confidence my love;
So shall it bind more tight on him!

Enter BERTRAND.

Ber. My lord, did you send for me?

Duke. I did, dear brother,
For I would counsel with thee, privately,
Upon a matter dear unto my soul,
Hear thy opinions, and have thy merits
And thy help, provided they are welcome!

Ber. O, most welcome! for, believe me,
It glads me much to know I can assist you,
And to such means as are in my power
I would say again, that you are welcome!

Duke. Thou know'st how long I have been sadly
grieved,
What a dread melancholy has settled
Upon my soul, even to make me shun
The feats and pleasures of my princely life;
Give up all care of state affairs to chance,
Leaving their proper usage to my friends!—
Also how I have e'er kept myself alone,
When it were possible—shunning mankind
As I would shun a medicine of ill taste,
And seeking companion in solitude,
Where I might feed my sadness all alone!

Ber. Alas, I know it!
Have I not told you it, and reasoned
In the love I bore you, so to persuade
Your highness to put off the deadly cloak
Which hung about your presence as a veil,
Making your day as night!—forgetting friends!
Subjects! relatives and all! in your own
Amount of misery? Oh yes, my lord,
You know I've felt for you!—so let me then
Entreat that I may share your confidence,
And bear part burthen of your sighs!

Duke. [*aside*] Oh how my soul exults within itself
To see thy unsuspecting nature, thus
Blind, entrapped to its ruin,
Which indicates the goal to my success!

Ber. What say you?—shall I receive your trust?

Duke. Thou shalt! so let me thank thy kindness,
And from this hour, I swear, dear Bertrand,
None other shall partake my confidence!

Ber. Let me not give acknowledgments in words,
But rather let my service speak my love
And do the office of my tongue,
So shall you judge me by my deeds,
For they are better teat of love!

Duke. Then hear me! 'Tis now full two months
since

The tournament: dost thou then remember
A beggar man, an old, decrepit man,
Care-wrinkled, lame, whose tott'ring limbs scarce bore
His wasted form along his way?—his face,
The very index of a grievous heart,

Seemed furrowed by many a tear
 Purged from his aged eyes!—and last, his form,
 Half-clad with rags that barely kept
 The rude and searching winds at bay, was thin
 And spare, even to the last hold of nature :—
 Propped by a staff, with a rude wallet by his side,
 This lame old man would cross the lists!

Ber. I do remember him well!

Duke. Scarce had he reached the centre of the field,
 When, prancing in my pride, in bright array,
 I crossed his path, and turning in my seat,
 Heedless of age and poverty, bade him away!
He, in the dignity of earlier years,
 Drawing his person to its youthful height,
 Boldly confronted me!—then slowly turned,
 And with a scornful smile pursued his way!
 Urged by my pride, and blinded in my zeal,
 I raised my lance and smote him to the ground!
 At this same moment came my lady by,
 With all her train of beauty at her heels,
 And knights and squires innumerable, who
 Were witness of the deed! With feelings prompt,
 Flew sweet Constancia to the old man's aid,
 And bending o'er him with a pity which
 Would sure have melted sterner hearts than mine,
 Exclaimed against me and the hand that smote
 So old a man,——

Ber. May heaven forgive thee!

Duke. ——— as thus by his side
 She knelt in sad compassion, forgetting all!—
 Station, rank, and dignity, in the full tide
 Of pity and of feeling for his woe!
 Waiting the return of consciousness, with
 Face more like an angel than a mortal's,
 I was all struck with wonder at the scene,
 And in amazement lost!—
 And thus, as in entranced shame I gaz'd,
 When I had done the wrong, there came from out
 My wonder something of admiration
 At the angelic beauty of my lady!
 From that sprung love, a burning, thirsty love,
 Which I have nursed all tenderly! and this,
 Dear Bertrand, is the cause of all my woe!

Ber. Alas, why fear for this?—
To love is youth's ambition, and you are young!

Duke. She loves me not!

Ber. How?

Duke. I have twice sent,
And have been twice refused!

Ber. Who sent you, my lord?

Duke. Gaston, my secretary!

Ber. Gaston!

Duke. Hast ought against him?

Ber. Nothing! yet he were the last
That I should choose to go on such an errand!—
A something in him that seems opposed
To goodness!—and vice does stand abashed
When it does front to virtue!

Duke. He had my full instructions in the matter,
That he should bear himself in every way
A man!

Ber. That were impossible! for nature will out!—
It is like a fire!—it shoots upwards, and shines
Even through the mask of deceit, be it
Ever so keenly guarded!

Duke. Then must I, as a last resource,
Look unto thee to aid me in it,
And be ambassador for me?

Ber. Most gladly, and that no time be lost,
Let's in and make our preparations!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*A Room in Gaston's House.*

ALICE alone, making a bouquet of flowers.

Alice. There, my work is done, and Frederick soon
will come!
How sweet they smell! yet not more sweet than love,
For that, of sweets, is sweetest! Happy flowers!—
How I do envy ye your simple state,
For ye shall rest in my Frederick's bosom,
And there sleeping—die! [*knocking*] I come! I come!
How impatient is true love! [*knocking.*]

[*Opens door.*]

Enter GASTON, hastily.

Gaston. Quick! make fast the door! they follow after!
Put out the light!—so—for hark, they come!

[A noise, as of persons passing.]

There, now are they gone by; I breathe again!

I'm safe! I'm safe! Ah, ah! the day is mine!

Let me see—the papers!—ah, here! all safe!—

Yet thou, poor youth, hast suffered, and I—

Alice. Father!

Gaston. Alice, I thought thou had'st been gone!—

Get thee, instant, to bed, and mark—be dumb!—

Forget all thou hast seen or heard this night,

As it had ne'er occurred, for there be those

Would, at the instigation of so much,

Seek thy father's life!

Alice. Oh! what means this horrid mystery?—

What hast thou done?—or what is this, that thou

Should'st fear the ear of man should know?

Gaston. Ask no questions, but get thee to bed;

Yet ere thou goest, relight this lamp!

[Alice takes lamp, and exit.]

How lone, how desolate I feel! One act

Has made me so, for the guilty ever fear

When they're opposed to their consciences!

And what is conscience, that it awakens fear?—

'Tis but a name!—imagination's goad,

That starts at dreams and shades, and if it wakes,

Then does suspicion also wake, and it—

The vulture tooth that gnaws it into life!—

Whilst guilt's companion, fear, sits at the heart,

And makes it beat as though it feared itself!

So let me steel my thoughts from conscience' voice,

And drive all fear and dark suspicion hence!

But soft! here comes my daughter!

[Re-enter Alice, with a light.]

Alice. Dear father! oh, why this dread mystery?

There's something wrong, for mystery and guilt

Go hand in hand—nay, thou startest!—oh heavens!

Gaston. Begone!—did I not bid thee leave me,

And thou art still here?—hence, I say!

Alice. Thy voice is rude, which ne'er before

Has spoke in passion to me!—oh, forgive me

If I have gone beyond my duty,
I meant no wrong!

Gaston. Get thee hence, I charge thee,
Or shall I speak more harshly to thee!

Alice. Nay, if I displease thee, staying,
Then will I go! [Exit.

Gaston. Oh peace! peace! my mind's a chaos!
What next? so, let me bethink!—Frederick dead!
Then is there an end to thy promotion,
And thy ambition solves itself in this:—
But thou, dear Alice! how must I pay this wrong
That I have done to thee?—ah, 'tis here! here!—
It must be done, then shall I be great indeed!
Once I was poor, and in my necessity
Did unbought to the world!—a beggar!—
A pauper on the bounty of the great!—
And lived upon the vapours of the earth!
But 'tis past now, I fear no future hence!
This shall make me rich! for herein it says
The Duke's a bastard!—a proper bastard!
Oh heavens, I thank thee!—he shall marry!—
The Duke shall marry!—marry with my daughter!
And this shall be the whip to scourge him to it,
Then shall I be rich indeed!

[Re-enter Alice, who kneels at her father's feet.

Alice. Father, forgive me!
I could not sleep if thou wert angry with me;
Thy passion else would haunt me!

Gaston. I do, I do! so leave me!

Alice. Nay, from thy heart? for thy words are cold,
And seem of empty meaning!

Gaston. From my heart I do!

Alice. And thy blessing, Father!

Gaston. Oh, this is folly!—

Why tax my patience thus?

Alice. Nay!—from childhood's earliest days
It has been thy nightly custom thus to bless me!
And oft, when with care oppressed was my heart,
Thy blessing's lighted it and made me happy!
Oh, do not call it folly, so to do!—
'Tis wise and good in sight of heaven,
And cannot, then, be foolish!—so bless me!—
As thou hast ever done, so bless me now!—

For o'er our sleep a parent's blessing hangs—
Guardian of our innocence!—so bless me!

Gaston. [aside] Oh that I could! but in my throat
Each word does stick, bur-like, choking my utterance!
Oh guilt! guilt! what heavy care is thine!

Alice. Thou hesitat'st!—thy lips do quiver,
And thy whole frame trembles!—Oh, why is this?

Gaston. 'Tis nothing!

Alice. Then bless me!

Gaston. Bl—bl—e—[*makes attempt to bless her.*
Oh, I cannot! I have no blessing left!—
The guilty have no blessing!

Alice. Guilty! oh heavens, what meanest?
Thy face is pale with fear, and big drops of sweat
Hang on thy brow, and thy whole frame does seem
Convulsed as with some inward agony!—
And ah! see! here is blood upon thy dress,
The dumb attestor of thy guilt!—oh God!
What horrid thoughts steal through my brain!
My mind misgives me, or thou hast murder done!—
Say, is't not so?—nay, it is!—I see it!—
'Tis written in thy face! yea, hang thine head,
That coward look was never thine till now! [*weeps.*

Gaston. It was for thee I did it!

Alice. How sayest thou?—for me?—oh, shame!
Would'st bring me guilty too, and like old sin,
Heap up thy crime upon another's care?

Gaston. Peace! 'twill make thee great and rich!

Alice. Peace no more!—peace, with innocence, has
fled!—

Having not one, the other is not ours,
For thou hast sold thy soul for gold!—oh, shame!—
My heart breaks as I think on't!—and ah!

[*Sees Frederick's pocket book.*
What's this? [*taking book from table*] it is my Freder-
rick's book!—

Support me, heaven! if that I fear be true,
Then art thou cursed indeed!—say, is it so?
Hast killed my Frederick?

Gaston. He is dead!

Alice. Dead!—God help me!—oh! it is too horrible,
And yet 'tis true!—thou art his murderer!—
Thou!—oh God! [*falls back on chair, weeping, with
her head on table.*

Gaston. Oh hence! [*rousing himself*] come hither!
how it weeps!

Alice! [*calling*] yet stay—here mourn thy loss to-day,
To-morrow thou shalt have another mate!—
Richer! nobler!—thou shalt soar high, Alice,
Higher than thou dreamest!—why strike sparrows down,
When the eagle's in our reach? Weep on, fool!—
Sigh! aye, moan too, and cry up thine eyes
Till their fonts be dry!—wash out with thy tears
The folly of thy heart!—drown its remembrance!
And make all clear again, that it do take,
Like wax, another proof of what men call
Affection, the easier for it!—aye, weep on!
It bodes well, as, after storms, there come calms—
So, after grief, come smiles, the heart's sunshine,
That goes so oft to steal men's hearts away
By their unprofitableness!—cry on!—
Ope thine eyes' floodgates, and drain their salt beds,
That there be not left so much as one poor drop
To rise in judgment 'gainst thy future love!

[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Room in Grammont.*

CONSTANCIA and MARGUERITE.

Const. DEAREST Marguerite, ask me not to leave
This solitude, it does best feed my love!

Mar. Nay, lady, I would not rob your joy
Of one single doit; but simply I would
Have you moderate your love! Leave this scene,
And join again the busy world as once you were!

Const. Time flies swiftly onwards, and events
Crowd in a narrow space, the which do change
Our very natures, even to make us loathe
That which was once our pleasure and our joy,
And make us rather choose what once we loathed!
The court—the gay, the flattering throng—was once
My all! I loved them, for they pleased mine ear
With whispering adulations, and thought
Their praises heartfelt, genuine!—but alas!
Love has taught me 'twas but emptiness, and op'd
Another and a brighter prospect!

This is now my world!—in this poor heart
Hides all my joys!—I have no hope but here!—
All passions, pleasures, are here concentrated!
Should I leave them—what were I then?—
Like to an unrudder'd ship, without or chart
Or compass, in tempest tossed, and no port
To shelter me! Oh, I once loved the world,
And followed it!—I was then its fondest
Votary!—but now, I love it not!—why
Should I then seek it?—should I not rather
Choose me that path which yields the fairest flowers?
This have I done, and thou would'st tear me from't!

Mar. Believe me, for your good!
It grieves me, as from day to day I note
The change come over you, each day more plain

And visible to th' eye! The rose-bud tinge
 Once mantled o'er your cheek, but now, alas!
 'Tis faded, and in its place is left
 A pale and sickly cast, which makes your friends
 Fear for your health!—th' elastic step no more
 Is yours!—the mellow voice, which oft has rang
 These tapestried rooms with joyful warblings,
 Has sunk to a lowly pitch! and the glad laugh,
 Whose tiniest echo was enough to make
 All hearts beat gladly, is now never heard,
 But in their place usurps a sadness which
 Again diffuses in your dear friends' hearts,
 And makes them melancholy with you!
 Even I, whom you do call your madcap cousin,
 Begin to feel your sadness grafting in me!
 So, leave then, this solitude, and again
 Join your dear interests with the world,
 If not for your own sake, at least for that
 Of your most anxious friends!

Const. I cannot! I have no heart for th' world!
 It is to me as a barren moor, with fens,
 And ditches, and pools of stagnant water,
 Which do impure the air unwholesomely,
 And makes my soul disgorge itself at its
 Infirmities!—a rank, a dreary waste,
 Over which the eye impatient seeks a spot
 Where it may smile upon and rest with joy,
 But finding none to claim a fellowship
 With its affection, shrinks back within itself
 Appalled, and turns it inwardly to seek
 In its own fancy that which the world denies!

Mar. Love's a wayward thing! 'tis like the wind,
 The heart its vane, which it does shift about
 To every point successive, rest in none!
 It is an arrant thief, that robs the mind!—
 An arch conspirator, that oft does plot
 To overthrow our peace!—nay, a very rogue,
 That points his weapons at our breasts, then laughs
 To see us struggling with the pain!

Const. To me it is a beacon of pure light,
 Which leads me on to happiness and joy!—
 A holy ray, as 'twere from heaven, which
 Illumes my path, and makes each hour appear

A bright spot in the memory of time!

Mar. Nay, 'tis a stream that has no banks,
And he who ventures on 't is as a boat,
His helmsman Cupid! so, when you sail upon 't,
Seeing there is no land on either range,
You do forget there is a world beyond,
And take your thoughts' complexion from the stream,
Oblivious of the friends you leave ashore!

Enter CAIUS.

Well, Caius, what wantest?

Ca. Nothing, I thank God, which is a pious answer,
and a contented one; but there be those are wanting,
and on their wants did I come!

Mar. And so, whilst thou spin'st thy wit, we may
be spinning our patience!

Ca. That were soon done, seeing the stock is so little!

Mar. It shall be less I promise thee, unless thou
givest us thy message quickly!

Const. Who is it, Caius, sent thee hither?

Ca. That I know not, farther than he appears a true
gentleman, though he lacks taste, seeing he would not
trust me with his business, saying it was for my lady
only!

Const. A prudent gentle, I warrant! Show him in!
[*Exit CAIUS.*]

A gentleman, good cousin! I like it not!

Mar. Therein we differ; I do!
Change is ever agreeable, and we
Have lacked variety full long, as
Our present tune has been a long one!
But see! here comes the gallant!

Enter BERTRAND.

Const. My Lord Bertrand!
I had not reckoned on this honour!—
You are most welcome hither, sir!

Mar. So I should think, I'll e'en away,
Two are enough at love to play! [Exit.]

Ber. Sweet lady, I thank your welcome! fair speech,
Befitting fairer lips! I would not wish
A better welcome from the world!

Const. You flatter me!

Ber. Pardon me, I speak but truth;
'Tis nature that has flattered you!
Her cunning hand in beauties has been kind,
And bounteous in all! I do but pay
My humble homage in admiration
Of her skill!

Const. Was't to this I stand indebted
For this visit?

Ber. Forgive me! I had forgot mine errand
In gazing on such matchless beauty!
For like a fair enchanter beauty stands,
Casting the magic of its 'chantment round
In lovely witchery, that enslaves our souls,
To the forgetting of all else!

Const. And pray you, wherein lies the sibyl charm,
That knowing 't, I may pluck it out, that then
Thou mayest inform me of thine errand here?

Ber. It lies not in one part alone,
But in the whole—the eyes, nose, lips, cheeks, form,
And magic of its voice!—'tis everywhere!

Const. You still forget your errand, sir!

Ber. Who would remember, having such sweet text
Before his eyes? Oh, I could gaze and speak,
And speak and gaze upon thy matchless form
For ever, forgetting all! yet, at once
To come to that which brought me hither,
I do confess I have not half a heart
To do it duty, being at the best
A novice in such matters!—but, 'tis this!—
My brother!—nay, start not at the name!

Const. I do surmise your business, sir!—
You come upon a losing suit, so pray,
In charity, be quick in th' speaking it!

Ber. Nay, 'tis no idle theme, nor common,
That I should slur it o'er!

Const. 'Tis, notwithstanding, sir, a fruitless one!—
Therefore would I spare you now the task
Which you have thus imposed on yourself,
And beg, in kind, as you would have my love,
Let drop this odious suit!

Ber. That I may have your love, sweet lady,
Would I now press this suit, so let me pray
You will a patient hearing entertain!

Const. If that would please you, sir, I'm mute!—
You have my full permission so to speak!

Ber. Yet do I stand i' th' index still,
And still would rather hear you, lady, speak,
Than I should take your words from off your lips,
Discoursing all myself!—but oh, dear lady,
My brother much desires his love to you,
And sends me, his poor mediate, to give 't
In his behalf! for oh! he loves you much,
Even to the forgetting of himself!—
All thought, feeling, ambition, and desire
In him, beat but for you! and in his breast,
Like jewel of inestimable worth,
He husbands the fond record of his heart,
Dear as his life and liberty!
Oh pity, then, his dear heart's sighs, and take
Compassion for his love!

Const. And can he ask compassion, granting none?
Have I not feelings and affections too,
Equal with him?—oh fie, my lord, fie!—
It is ungenerous to bait me thus!—[*pauses.*]
Hold! no more!—I have with patience heard you,
Hear me now, and take this final answer back:—
I cannot love him!—if that suffice not,
Tell him, if he does love, so do I love!—
But preferring mine own passion's object,
I would advance it first! So, farewell! [*going.*]

Ber. Stay, sweet lady!

Const. What more you have to say, I would not hear,
If it be on this purpose! As for yourself,
If you should pass this way again, my lord,
You will be welcome if you call! Farewell!—
Yet stay! and ere you go, accept this ring,
Wear it for my sake!—but, as you love me,
Come not again upon this foolish errand!—
So, farewell!

Ber. I thank you, lady, and for your sake, I'll wear it—
A talisman to hold you in my mind,
Like a fond record of your beauty!
As for my brother, be not so cruel,
But pay his dear heart's sighs with love for love,
That when I may return, you 'll faithful prove,
And bless his name that now does send his love!
Farewell! [*Exeunt sep. ways.*]

SCENE II.—*The Country.**Enter CAIUS and JACQUES.*

Ca. THERE is no news! not so much as would pay thy curiosity a foot-pace! Talk of court! I tell thee 'tis nought!—from rich soil it has come to glebe land, and wit springs not in bad ground!

Ja. How, I pray thee?

Ca. It is even thus:—its master is in love, love breeds idleness, and your idle husbandman tills no land!

Ja. Yet were there courtiers, and court dames, those thou saw?

Ca. Corruption! and when thou speak'st of them again, bethink thee 'tis nought!—for what are courtly dames to thee? are there not wenches enough to serve thy turn i' th' country, but thou must prate of court dames?

Ja. Aye, but country wenches be coarse furniture before such like!

Ca. Nay, I assure thee! for your country maid is true wood, but the other, mark thee, is veneer'd, and not in grain! Now, listen, and I will tell thee the difference! First, your lady, she must be tinsell'd, and painted!—wear her silks and satins, her jewels, and the like, else is she nought! She must be proud, and speak scandal!—swear by her honour, the which she holds lightly!—intrigue!—dice!—card!—oath! and the like!—the which are held as court accomplishments; besides many other vices, which with them are virtues!

Ja. Good!

Ca. I tell thee, 'tis not good! 'tis bad as the devil can make it!—but the other!—

Ja. Aye, the other—now the country wench!

Ca. Unlike the other, she is as God made her! Her skin is soft as down, and needs no paint but nature's, which is the sun! Her garments are modesty, and I'll warrant thee, the lining of her apparel is richer than the other's tissue! She is deck'd in innocence, is humble, and says no ill of her neighbours!—her virtue is her wedding portion, the which she is as chary on as her life!—she knows not the use of dice or card!—her bible

is her amusement and comfort, and as she sits at her spinning wheel she sings defiance to fortune! And what if her hand is hard with labour? her heart is soft with pity, and her charity is ever up to her means; yea, she does all things so sweetly, it seems ignorance knows no ill!—and thus lives she, and all her care is, she may die in the spring time, that she may have store of flowers stuck in her winding sheet!

Ja. Thou drawest a pretty picture, and I like thy country wench so well, henceforth I'll think with thee! But see thee, who is this comes here?

Ca. It is Antonio, as I live!

Enter ANTONIO.

An. Ah, Caius and Jacques, how are ye?

Ca. et Ja. Well, I thank yer honour!

An. How fares your mistress?

Ca. Marry, sparingly! her's is the cameleon's dish, for she feeds on love, which is no more than air!

An. And how my Lady Marguerite?

Ca. The same you left her!

An. I thank thee! Jacques, here is a ducat for thee, hie thee to Grammont, and charge the Lady Marguerite with my coming! [*Exit JACQUES.*]

Ca. Marry, sir, an' your left hand is not an evil-doer; I am no fool!

An. How so?

Ca. Seeing it does not follow the good example of its neighbour, which is full of charity!

An. Come, here is one for thee!

Ca. Now 'tis well! but tell me how is't you have so returned from your travels?

An. Family affairs, Caius!

Ca. Family affairs! well, I suppose love is a domestic animal?

An. It is in the list, I promise thee! But I must be gone! Farewell!

Ca. Farewell!

[*Exeunt sep.*]

SCENE III.—*The Country.*

Enter BERTRAND.

Ber. What if it were so? and that she loves, 'tis true,

As she herself doth say! So do I love!—
 But who? My brother is the highest here,
 As Messina's Duke and he hath offered
 Love for love!—but that she will not hear of!—
 Make her partaker of his Dukedom! yet,
 Forgetting all in her own love, she spurns
 His coronet as 'twere a common gift,
 Made to her daily! Who, then, can she love,
 Seeing she does refuse the head o' th' state
 With as little heed as it were nothing?
 Oh woman! why wast thou made so fair!
 So strange! so whimsical! and yet so lovely!—
 Of nature of such extreme delicacy,
 That thou canst e'en enslave us at thy will,
 And make us bow before thee? Oh, most sweet!—
 Methought thine eyes spoke plainly of thy love,
 That it was meant for me!—God grant it be so!
 Thou said'st 'as I would have thy love!' and again
 'As I did love thee!' So do I!—but oh,
 I am so bound and pledged to my word
 I dare not speak my love, so hangs my soul
 Poised, mid air, 'twixt joy and misery!—
 Joy in its grasp, and yet, without it!—
 The fruit most tempting offered me, and yet,
 I cannot partake it!—my honour holds me,
 And I'm wretched! Oh, welcome misery,
 That lights in such a shape of heaven!—
 Thrice welcome art thou!—here rest thee in this poor
 breast,
 Hid from the day, that no lynx eyes may see
 Thee nestling there, not even through those orbs
 That so oft do prove the tell-tale of the heart,
 To our undoing! But soft!—who comes here?

Enter ANTONIO.

Antonio!

An. My friend!

Ber. Aye, friend indeed! and one
 Right glad to see thee at such pinch! But first,
 How here? methought thou hadst been absent still
 A twelvemonth yet to come!

An. So had I purposed!—
 But hearing in my travels certain news

Which much did influence me, I hastened back,
And so am with you now!

Ber. Dame Fortune has been kind, Antonio,
In sending such a friend; yet may I hope
Thou find'st all well, here in Messina!

An. So far, all!

How fares it with your lordship?

Ber. Indifferently well, yet well as most!
For at best, Antonio, this poor world
We live in, is most like a tennis court,
Wherein Dame Fortune is the racket used
To toss us mortals as we would a ball!

An. You speak parables, my lord!

Ber. May I trust thee?

An. Be assured you may! yet, should you fear,
I pray you will withhold your confidence,
Now on the threshold!

Ber. Forgive me! I did thee wrong to doubt,
So take my hand upon my future faith,
And that I may not lose too much of time
In the delivery, I'll give't thee in two words,
Which simply are—I love!

An. Why grieve at this?

Love is honourable, if 'tis fairly meant,
And rather made for joy than sorrow!—
But who love you?

Ber. One, the fairest of her sex!—oh, so fair,
She does eclipse all others of her kind,
As the bright moon, the stars, the day, the night!—
A very grace, that when she moves, Venus,
With all her train, do seem to wait on her,
And lend new beauties unto every act!—
And when she opes her lips, there reveals
Two rows of radiant pearl, whence proceeds
Such fairy music, that enchantment sits
On every listener, and enslaves them!
In short, to sum perfection in a word,
Her name's Constancia!

An. The daughter of the Count Grammont,
So lately dead?

Ber. The same!

An. And is it grief to love so fair as she?

Ber. Thou knowest not all, Antonio!

An. Does she refuse you then, my lord?

Ber. On the contrary, I believe she loves me,
Yet dare I not make confession of my love
For this:—my brother has affection for her,
And I have promised him my influence
In mediation, and have already
Been his embassy! Thus my tongue is tied
And sealed to my love, so pledged am I
To honour and my word!

An. Alas then, is 't so desperate?

Ber. Desperate! no, nought is desperate
That is in heaven's hands!—'tis wrong to taunt
The will of God with such a word!—no! no!
It is not so bad!—I yet live in hope!
It is the polar star shall lead me on
Through every sorrow, and by every shade
Guide me to trust the wisdom of His will
Who made me that I am—to hope, to live!
For without hope is death, or worse than death,
A life of dark and superstitious fear,
And he who has it not is as a dim
Meteor gliding causeless by!—a lamp,
Without a light!—a book, without a tale!—
Something! nothing!—dead, yet living! for hope,
Antonio, is the parent of to come!—
The foretaste of bliss! yea, 'tis bliss itself!
And in its visionary world all live
Who trust for an hereafter!—all men scheme,
All plot, and seek to work the fulfilment
Of their desires with hope to guide them!

An. What can you hope?

Ber. What?—every thing! What is life and youth
But hope!—the enthusiasm of all time!—
The spring of action, and the needle north?
Oh Antonio, let me tell thee
Constancia loveth not the Duke! nay, she
Besought me tell him that she loved him not,
But had her heart's affection firmly set
Upon another! and more as at her feet
I knelt beseeching in my brother's cause,
She gave me looks of such sweet meaning
As went near to rob me of my purpose, so
That I could scarce withhold myself the part

Which I had chosen!—her sighs fill'd the air,
 Her bosom heav'd, and from her sparkling eyes
 Affection spoke more eloquent than words!
 In that dear moment I forgot myself,
 As nigh to mar the promise that I'd given,
 And were it not that honour held me back,
 I sure had tried my fortune in my love,
 And known it from her lips she loved me!
 Dost not think, then, that I have cause to hope,
 Or shall I say with thee 'tis desperate?

An. Nay, my lord!

If that you've seen be true, and what you've seen
 Take not the guilt of your infection, then
 I would advise you leave it with the Duke!

Ber. What! give up my love? never!
 No! no! my heart's so firmly fix'd upon 't,
 That if it cannot love without his leave,
 Freely, openly, then shall it junket on 't,
 And live in misery!

An. The Duke would not such sacrifice,
 So let me pray you, good my lord, to go
 Unfold yourself unto him—tell him all,
 He will not refuse!

Ber. Thou know'st him not, good friend! yet to please
 thee

I will go, but, not to publish of my love,
 Not to tell him that she loves me
 And refuses him!—oh no! Antonio,
 He would take it boasting, and would think
 I had intentionally overcome him,
 But I will give 't him word for word, as she
 Would have me, that—'as he loved, so did she,
 But preferring her own heart's desires to his,
 She must advance it first!' This will I do,
 No more, and leave the rest to Providence!

An. And would you close all hope without one risk
 For such adventure?

Ber. Oh no! hope is never shut!—it lights the heart
 On unto death, and ne'er deserts us!—
 It is our truest friend, and gives us heart,
 And smiles most sweet when fate is darkest!
 The poor deserted and condemned felon
 Hopes and smiles at the rattling of his chains,

And bears his faith even to the scaffold,
 And still hoping, dies!—and shall he, poor slave,
 With such dark horrors round his head, teach me
 Such sweet'st of patience?—oh no! my good friend,
 That hope is such a jewel in my heart
 I would not dim it by the slightest chance
 Of a refusal! But come, walk with me!

An. Nay, my lord, you must excuse me!
 I go to Grammont, for I have business there,
 Yet, ere we part, I fain would learn, my lord,
 How was my Lady Marguerite when you left?

Ber. Well! but what's it to thee?

An. Much, I thank God! Oh what a peace it brings,
 When after years of absence we return
 To home and country, and to friends we've left,
 And find all well again—but more, in love!
 Sweet Marguerite, yet may'st thou think of me,
 Dear as when first thou didst profess it to me
 That thou loved'st me, and ever would prove faithful!

My lord, be not amazed!

I am a lover too, fond as yourself,
 And oh it gives me joy to find her well!
 Years of absence, endeared by the thought
 Of once more seeing her, of blessing her,
 And pressing her again unto my breast,
 Faithful and true as ever, seem nigh to
 Their accomplishment—the eve of my soul's bliss!

Ber. A lover! let me congratulate thee,
 Yet will I speak thee on 't another day,
 Now I must begone! So, farewell!

An. Farewell, my lord!

[*Exit.*

Ber. Think of me! [*going, is stopped by GASTON,*
meeting him.

Gaston. My lord, stay!

Ber. What would'st thou?

Gaston. You love the Lady Constançia!

Nay, why start? 'tis true!—I heard you say it
 But a moment past!

Ber. Even so, what then?

Gaston. So does the Duke, your brother,
 Though not beloved in return!

Ber. By heavens, thou hast played eaves with us!
 How dar'st thou thus intrude thyself?

Gaston. For your advantage, good my lord!

Ber. How?

Gaston. Ask no questions, but trust me 'tis so,
And do but as Antonio would have you,
All shall prove well!

Ber. Oh that thy prophecy should come true!

Gaston. It will, it must, the end shall prove it!
But shake this false delicacy off,
And stand forth as a man for your own right,
And leave the rest to me!

[*Exit GASTON.*]

Ber. Oh what a paradox is life!—how strange
In theory, and how mixed in action!—
How often noble, and yet how oftener
Depending!—for, like the checker's game, 'tis
Ever checking, and being checked!—the great,
The small—the small, the great supporting!—
One moment bold, the next all full of fear,
Which drives us trembling back on our resource,
Even as now I am! And yet
Why should I fear, having no cause of dread?—
Why stand upon the question of agnition
Thus like a coward?—shall I not expect
Affection from my brother for my trust,
(Supposing that I now do trust in him)
Rather than hate? Thus, he loves my lady,
Yet is not beloved in return!—so then,;
In her denial he cannot hope return,
But must abjure his love!—thus far, thus good!
Why fear then? What if I snatch a jewel,
He cannot win? How do I wrong to him?—
Or how, if I should now renounce my love,
Do I him favor?—no! then 'tis a false,
Uncalled-for daintiness, to withhold
This dear confession from him, so will I
Take these friends' advice, and leave the end
To its own issue!

[*Exit.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the Palace.*

DUKE solus.

Now does my love impatient burn within,
And urge me onward to achieve its end
Through all obstruction! for, that she hates me,
And will not to a willing market come,
But feed her own affection first, 'tis true!—
So shall I seek to obtund her love, in
First removing her heart's object from her!
Thus then, 'tis plain she loves Lord Bertrand, so
Have I scotch'd him!—he dares not speak her love,
Yet, whilst he lives, she must affection him
In her remembrance, which, whiles it endures,
Must work 'gainst the insition of my love!
Oh how I hate him! now, more than ever!
Yet why? he never shewed me cause till now,
Still do I hate him, and it shall go hard
But I will dig a mine as deep as they,
And blast their ends! She hath refused me!—
For what? because she loves my brother?—bah!—
She must, she shall be mine! nor all the love
Of Sicily shall plead against my cause,
And let me only win her, she shall learn,
When 'tis too late, who is her master!

Enter PAGE.

How now?

Page. Lord Bertrand, your highness!

Duke. Bid him in! [*exit PAGE.*]

So let me wear the brother o'er my heart,
But in it be the serpent that shall blight him,
Seem that I am not, and in seeming that,
Gain prepossession of him!

Enter BERTRAND.

Ber. Good day, your highness!

Duke. The same to thee, good brother!

Ber. I called, my lord,
Upon the matter of your love!

Duke. Thou hast told me once, she does refuse me!

Ber. Aye, my lord, but I forgot to tell you
That she another loves!

Duke. Another! oh, then, does she hate me?

Ber. Nay, not hate you!

Duke. I love her, Bertrand, and he whom she would
Could not make up one-half the sum in his
Affection, as I could for her! Oh love!
And has it come to this! Break, heart! sigh out
Thy folly, and be no more the gull'd of womankind!—
Yet do I swear that I will have her yet,
And if she will not for my love, then shall
She for my hate, affianced with me!—nay, more,
Let him that loves her dare but cross my path,
It shall be hard with him!

Ber. Hold, my lord, you do forget!—
You dare not force her into this alliance!

Duke. Who says dare not?

Ber. I!

Duke. And who art thou that say'st it,
And by what right?

Ber. He whom she loves, the which shall be
My right!

Duke. [*aside*] Ha! my curse upon thee!
Oh what venom's in my breast, that would fain
Hiss hot upon my tongue, and blast thee now!

Ber. Hear me, my lord, and be not rashly borne
In this respect, for I would fain serve you,
Even as a subject, and a brother!—

Nay, turn not thus away, I pray you hear me!

Duke. What canst thou to excuse thyself?
Speak! and if thou canst, then wipe the
Damned stain from thy now tarnished name!—
Thy honour and thy word broken, piece them,
If so be thou art able!

Ber. That which is whole needs no mending!

Duke. Canst call them so, when thou hast dared
To love Constancia even against thy pledge?
Out, man!

Ber. By heavens, you do me wrong, my lord!

Duke. In what?—may insult be too great
For one dishonoured as thou art?

Ber. 'Tis false!

Duke. How, sir?

Ber. I say again 'tis false! my word is whole!

Duke. What! didst not pledge thyself
That thou would'st woo for me, and hast not dared
To woo her for thyself?

Ber. Never! even as I pledged, so have I done!

Duke. How! dost not love her, then?

Ber. Love her? if that is love which at first sight
Is called affection, then do I love her,
But never have I, in either word or deed,
Run counter to my pledge! nay, hear me more:—
I know it not for certain that she loves me,
Yet scarce doubt it; for, as I woo'd her thus,
My lord, with prayers and importunities,
To hearken to your suit, she bade me hush,
And said, 'as I did love her, let drop
This odious suit!' and again, 'as I would have her love,
Come not again upon this foolish errand!'—
Yea, more, she bade me tell you, 'as you loved,
So did she love! but preferring her own
Passion's object, she would advance it first!'—
And as I knelt entreating at her feet,
She gave me looks of such sweet meaning, as
Went nigh to rob me of my purpose!—
Her bosom heaved, and from her eyes shot forth
Her whole heart's faith! then from her finger pluck'd
This diamond ring, and bade me wear it for her sake!—
And this, my lord, 's the whole course of my love!

Duke. 'Odious suit!'—'let drop this foolish errand!'—
And 'as I loved, so did she love! the which
She would advance the first!'—my curse be on her!
Yet will I win her, for I do swear
None else shall wear her! [aside.]

Ber. My lord!

Duke. What would'st thou?

Ber. As it is plain upon this suit you cannot win,
So I would have your free consent to woo
Her for myself!

Duke. No! by heavens!—to beard me thus!

Away, proud fool! and dare not to presume,
For I do tell thee she shall yet be mine,
If not by right, at least by might!

Ber. Never, my lord! you dare not!

Duke. What! dost dare me?

Ber. Aye, and more, you shall not!

Duke. This to my face?

Ber. To thy teeth, proud Duke!—
Dost think I fear thee?

Duke. If not, thou shalt be made!
What, ho! within!

Enter GUARDS.

Seize the knave, and away to prison with him!

Ber. Stand back, upon your lives stand back!—
The first that comes within my reach shall die!

Duke. What, cowards! fear ye one?—

Seize him, I charge you, on this instant!

Ha! beat down his weapon!

Ber. Back, villains! I defy you!—

So! [*one falls, the rest retreat*] Who comes on next?

What, no more? then, weapon, to thy rest!

So, farewell, my lord! I thank you for your

Kind intent upon me, yet oh, beware!—

Thy purposes are known, aye, and shall be watched!

[*Exit.*]

Duke. Away, slaves, and upon your lives,

I charge you, bring him back!

What, stand ye still?—begone!

Or, by heavens, I'll be the death of him that stays!

[*Exeunt GUARDS.*]

So, 'tis past! the bubble's blown and burst!

And enterprise has turned against me

For this while! yet shall there a time come,

When events shall prove more favorable!

Beware! aye, so would I say, beware!

For thou 'st more need of caution, didst but know! [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.—*The Country.*

Enter BERTRAND and ANTONIO.

Ber. Since he has broken faith with me,
I am so far free to woo, and will,

Upon thy assurance, make free to love!

An. You may, my lord! and fear not th' issue,
I had it from her cousin's lips she loved you,
The which cannot be doubted!—so, my lord,
I would advise you now upon the spur
Make haste to Grammont!—there, at evening's time,
Ere the bright day be fairly lost in night,
You may chance find her all alone i' th' garden,
Where she has made a custom'd walk of late,
Through Marguerite's persuasion!

Ber. I will, Antonio! See, she gave me this,
This ring!—it is like the love I bear her,
Without end! and the diamond, 'tis as bright
As the affection which illumines my soul,
By which token I will adventure me
In search of her sweet love!

So for the present I will leave thee here
Whilst I do go in search of my heart's dear!

An. Stay, my lord, I have a market there,
And will go with you!

Ber. Come then, let us begone! the wings of love
Do never laggard in their journey prove! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*Garden at Grammont.—Evening.*

CONSTANCIA and MARGUERITE *sitting together.*

Const. 'Tis a fair evening!—the twilight hour
Is ever best for thought; it opes the heart
With its calmness, and makes the soul to feel,
As 'twere, responsive echoes in her breast
Of harmony and love! The sweet birds' songs
Wake the dull grove with gladness and with joy,
Yet melancholy gladness and sad joy,
Like to the requiem of departing day,
Nature's sweet vespers! Here could I sit
And muse throughout the night on the bright stars
That gem the firmament, and fancy there,
In their fair aspect, what was yet to come,
Read my poor fate, and from it learn what next,
What after—so on to the end!
Oh 'tis a mighty book!—nature has many such!—
Years are her volumes!—months her cantos!—

Weeks, chapters! and the days her verses,
In which the past is written!—so are all things,
Even from the lowliest to th' sublimest,
Noted in the great books of nature!

Mar. You are sad to-night!

Const. 'Tis a sweet sadness,
For love is its breeder!

Mar. I would Lord Bertrand now were here,
Methinks he soon would ease your doubtings!

Const. Heigho! [*shaking her head.*]

Mar. Nay, fear not for him, I know he loves you!—
Antonio told me that he loved you,
Yea, and would ere this have woo'd you, had he not
Promised his service to the Duke!

Const. There is he bound; even if he loves me
With such gift of service, he cannot woo
With honor to himself! But see,
Here comes Antonio!

Enter ANTONIO.

An. Fair evening, Lady Constance!

Const. Good evening!—

My cousin Marguerite has been eager
For thy company!

Mar. And I trow she can speak for herself!
Marry, there are others eager too for that!
Antonio knows his welcome here!

An. A faithful heart, good Meg! well met
By one as faithful! Your pardon, lady!—
Come, sweet heart, let us walk!

[*beckons to Bertrand, who enters at the back.*]

Const. A sweet hour to ye both!

An. The same unto you, lady!

[*Exeunt MARGUERITE and ANTONIO.*]

Ber. God grant me grace, 'tis her!—oh most sweet!
How could I worship thee, fair saint, that sits
So firmly 'sconced in my heart's core!—
Now will I to her, and make confession
Of my love! yet would I still linger here,
And gaze and listen, and listening, gaze,
Until the time was lost! Oh love! wild love!
How beats my heart, and swells my inmost soul,

Until its mortal shroud does seem too small,
 And it would burst its bonds! Oh most sweet love,
 Fairest and brightest of this mind's creation,
 How I do love thee!—bless thee!—aye, adore!—
 For verily I do worship thee in this fond heart
 Past all denial! Soft! she speaks!
 Sweet words!—let me hear you!

Const. Oh that he but knew
 This heart's affection, how it beats for him,
 Then would he think of me, erase all doubt
 From out his mind, and woo me for his love!
 Oh Bertrand!

Ber. Myself?

Const. Would'st thou were here,
 That I might tell thee now how much I feel
 Of fond affection for thee!

Ber. Good heavens, I thank ye!

Const. Oh for enchantment's fairy wand
 That I might conjure thee, sweet love, from where
 Thou art, into my presence now! Oh bliss!—
 One hour of such were worth whole years of pain!

Ber. [*advancing, and kneeling at her feet*] Sweet
 love! here, here, at thy wish!

Const. Bertrand!—my lord!—I do forget!

Ber. No, Bertrand still!—call me Bertrand,
 It sounds sweet upon thy lips, and though plain,
 It 'sumes a rank when issued from such
 Oracle, more dear than wealth can give!

Const. What would'st?

Ber. ————— I would have thy love,
 Even as but now thou said'st it,
 For I do love thee, oh beyond compare,
 The most of all!—thou art my chief of thought,
 The essence of my life, my dear soul's joy,
 The treasure of my heart!—all affection,
 Bliss, and happiness, in thee are centred!—
 Oh let me love thee, then, and be to me
 That which thou said'st!

Const. Alas, forgive me!

Ber. Forgive thee! what?—thy love?—
 For nought else see I in thee to forgive,
 But the sweet words thou utter'dst to thyself
 Respecting me, which are not to forgive,

But rather in return to take my blessing,
 As counter for them!—yet would I give't thee back,
 The giving it again, that I again
 Might hear the angel music of those lips,
 In blessing me with such a sacred boon
 As I do hold thy love!—I do forgive thee,
 Yet but that I may hear thee say once more
 That thou dost love me! not that I do fear
 Retraction of thy vows, for if thou lovest
 As I love, and as I would have thee love,
 With thy whole soul, then have I nought to fear;
 For when the heart is by fond love possess'd
 It yields it wholly to 't, and suffers it
 From a tiny shoot to grow, until
 At length there is no portion of it left
 Where this affection is not, as 'twas with me!
 Mine was of rapid growth! When first we met,
 Though on a cause opposed to us both,
 Thy bright eyes gazed on mine, and through them dropt
 The seed of love which rooted in my heart,
 And quickly sprung into the goodly tree
 Which now it is! With this I give thee back
 Thy love, but—that thou 'lt give it me again!
 Say, shall I expect it?

Const. Thou hast it now, already,
 Even before thou ask'd it!—what would'st more?
 If I have said I love thee, so do I!
 And though 'twas said in secret, I meant not
 In idle levity to speak, that in
 More open moment I might gainsay it!
 Still could I wish thou hadst not known my love,
 That then thou might have ask'd it ere 'twas given,
 And I might give it thee more seasonable
 Than now thou hast it!

Ber. Heaven bless thee for it!
 How happy is it thus to greet thee, thus
 To call thee mine and clasp thee to my breast,
 The fondly cherished of my youthful dreams,
 The idol and adored of my heart!
 Oh what life, what bliss were this to me!
 How sweetly tells it in my bosom!—mine
 To woo thee for myself alone, and find
 An echo of my faith within thy breast

As faithful and as fond!—Oh sweet again!

Const. What, dear Bertrand?

Ber. Hear thee say again thou lovest me!

Const. I love thee! again, and yet again!
Oh, I could say I love thee, sweet, for ever!

Ber. Bless thee! bless thee for it!

And is it truly thee, or art thou but
Imagination's form, Constancia, love?—
Art real? or is this but the rapture of a dream
Will fade again to-morrow?—no! 'tis true!
It is!—it is thyself, and thou dost love me!

Const. Love thee! when did I not?

From the first moment that these eyes did see
Thine image it entered in my heart!
Even before I knew thee I did love thee,
And but that the words do tremble on my lips,
I would recount thee such a sweet tale of love
Thou should'st not doubt me!

Ber. Love, I do not! yet would I,
For oh 'tis sweet to doubt, when by a doubt
I can beguile thee of thy sighs, and hear
Those dear lips vindicate thy cause!

Const. Oh, cruel sport were that, dear heart, in thee,
To give me pain that thou might'st blessed be!

Ber. Nay!

I would not pain thee but to make more whole
The sum of our united happiness!
But let us walk, for here Antonio comes,
And with him his heart's dear!

Const. It is too late!

Ber. Nay, see how fair the night, and the bright moon
How it does glide along the arch of heaven,
To earth a second day, and the silvery stars
Besprinkled o'er the ethereal vast
Like diamonds in the sky! Oh 'tis a night
Made most effectively for love! and see,
Antonio has turned again!

Const. Homeward! that path leads to the house!
I will e'en after them! Here wait you then,
And if I can, I will return; if not—good night!

Ber. Nay, if we part, not thus!—

One kiss, sweet love, and so—good night!

Const. Good night! each second is an hour

Until we meet again!

[*Exit.*

Ber. Oh what a night were this! yet do I fear,
It being night, that all is but a dream,
Too sweet to last, and that the morrow's sun
Too soon shall touch with envious streaks the east,
And wake this transient bliss to stern reality!—
Yet shall this night stand blessed in my days,
And be a bright spot shining through my time
On which my memory shall oft return
To gaze upon and bless! Oh, there is nought
So sweet in life as when love's young bud
First puts forth its blossoms to the world,
And finds a true return to all its hopes!

Re-enter ANTONIO.

An. Good my lord, this way!
My lady would a word ere you depart!

Ber. A hundred, if she wish, with all my heart!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Palace.*—DUKE and GASTON seated.

Duke. A bastard, say'st thou?

Gaston. Aye, a bastard!

Duke. How?

Gaston. Some thirty years ago, ere the late Duke
Took to himself a wife to share his bed
And bring him heirs to th' State, it happened that
His highness loved a poor and humble girl,
Annette by name, simple and unadorned,
Yet lovely as the morn!—she loved him too,
Dearer than herself, for she did forfeit
All that she had, her virtue, for his love!
About this time the State required him
That he should marry!

Duke. Did he wed Annette?

Gaston. No! though to part with her it grieved him,
For he had much affection for her;
But as his pride would not admit such love,
He chose a noble dame from out his court,
And married her! In course of time, my lord,
She bore a son; but previously to this
Did his Annette bring proof of love,
Who likewise bore a son!

Duke. Well, well, proceed!—
Thy tale int'rests me!

Gaston. It was the unnatural fashion then
With noble dames to engage young mothers
To rear their children: thus it chanced Annette
Was chosen nurse to the young lord!
Her wrong, a mother's love was strong within her,
Convenience favorable, so did she change
Her own son, which was thee, for him!

Duke. ~~Mar!~~ tis false! false as hell!—
Where are thy proofs?

Gaston. 'Tis true!—see here!
A letter from thy father to Annette

Corroborates its birth, and here others,
Which further prove it!

Duke. Oh hell! how crumbles into dust
The baseless structure of my dreams!
But where, where is he, the right and proper heir?

Gaston. Dead!—thy mother's wrongs so preyed upon
her

That she forgot her gentler nature—
She murdered him!

Duke. Murdered!

Gaston. Aye, she could not love to look upon
The thing which robbed her of his love!—
She murdered him!

Duke. Oh 'twas a villainous deed, and she is damned
for it!

Gaston. She was thy mother!

Duke. And where is she?

Gaston. In her grave!—she died in raving madness,
Calling on thee to give up thy Dukedom,
And make what other recompense thou could'st
For her iniquity!

Duke. Who know of this?

Gaston. None other than myself!

Duke. [*aside*] 'Tis well!—so must I then
To work on thee, and see if by fair means
I can obstruct thy speech!—if not, look to 't!

Gaston. What think your highness?

Duke. Think, good Gaston, I cannot think!—
This tale of thine has put me past all thought,
And all resolve melts into air, or stands
Upon the barren shore of fickle will!
What shall I do? Shall I deliver up
The pomp and dignity of my usurped state
Which ever from my childhood has been held
As my proper right?—give up my sceptre!
Yield my crown! and doff unto Lord Bertrand
The ermined cloak of royalty? Shall I
Bend and kneel for court favors, and with fair speech
Studied for the occasion ask an alms?—
I! that have never crooked knee to man,
Or curried favor, but have been ever knelt to
And homaged through my life even as a prince!—
Oh no! good Gaston, thou would'st not thus!—

Thou would'st not thus!

Gaston. My lord, hear me!—

I was once a poor child, my parents poor,
 Who for my dower did leave scarce rags
 With which to keep the angry winter bay!—
 I was then a child, alone upon the world,
 No friends, no relatives—a lone outcast,
 And for my meals I was perforced to beg,
 And seek from door to door!—some gave me kicks,
 Some curses, and some few gave me bread, yet
 They were few indeed, for I was poor!—
 The rich each day passed by me as I begg'd;
 Some threw their pence, perchance some silver,
 Whilst others lash'd me as they would lash a dog,
 And spurned me from them thus, with disgust!
 This poverty, my lord, did whet my avarice,
 For I'd ambition in me to be rich,
 So formed my plans! Every doit I saved
 And hoarded with a jealous husbandry,
 No work begrudging, that would bring money,
 However mean! Thus did I thrive and live,
 Until at length I rose, my lord, to this,
 What now I am, your secretary! so—
 Your pardon yet awhile, my lord—
 This avarice, which has been my life-blood;
 As it were, is not yet quite satisfied,
 I would be richer still! mark you, richer!—
 You know the terms on which I serve you now!

Duke. Would'st be made noble?

Gaston. Noble! will it make wealth? will it feed me,
 Clothe me, or will it none of these?—no! no!
 Then will I not have it!

Duke. What then would'st?

Gaston. Money and lands! they make rich!
 By them men's worth and station is made out,
 They are the standard of nobility!—
 Nobility itself is an empty name,
 And fools alone do seek it!

Duke. Thou shalt have both, both, good Gaston!
 Keep thee quiet, thou shalt be rich indeed!
 Have mines of wealth! but let this matter rest!
 So away, I have promised thee!

Gaston. Soft!

I do not build on promises! they feed not,
 But are designed to keep proud suitors bay,
 And give them wind to ask another day;
 Oft made in jest, and seldom made to keep,
 And men are fools who on such breakage sleep!
 Give me your bond, my lord, for that alone
 Can give content when promises are none!

Duke. Suspicious knave, how dar'st thou?

Gaston. What I think, I dare!

The bond, my lord, or forfeit to your throne,
 'Tis mine, and I will have it!

Duke. Indeed!—but that thou pinn'st me to the wall
 Thou dar'st not trifle with me thus!

[sits down and writes.]

Gaston. Now is the vision of my younger days
 Come unto hand! already do I grasp
 Wealth and lands as mine, that by their joint aid
 I shall be rich! Oh what a sound were that!
 How sweetly falls it on the tempered ear,
 That after years of hoarding it should thus
 By one good stroke of fortune! I am rich!—
 Great gods, I thank ye!

Duke. Here is the bond, so leave me!

Gaston. Rest you fair, my lord,
 I have one more request to make ere I
 Do take my leave, which I do nothing doubt
 Will meet your ends, and this, may it please your high-
 ness,

Is but the prelude to what I now would ask!

Duke. What, more?

Gaston. I have a daughter!

Duke. Well!

Gaston. I love her tenderly!

Duke. Would'st have money for her, too?

Gaston. No, not money! yet would I have thee give
 That which is dearer to thee far than money!

Duke. Speak out! what would'st?—
 Suspense is damnable!

Gaston. She had a lover once, a true lover,
 Which I for mine own end did ease her of!
 She loved him, mourned for him; and I did pity her!

Duke. Well!

Gaston. I have affection here for her,

Though it to some may seem a strange anomaly
That villainy and love should dwell together
Within one common breast, yet it is so!—
This heart beats for her, and I pitied her
When I did see her weep!

Duke. What is this to me?

Gaston. Everything!

You have been paying court to Lady Constance!
Your brother was your rival, then unknown
To him!—you have been refused of her,
And he has been accepted!—from this it seems
Your highness would take a wife from th' world,
And as my daughter's free, I would you took
Her for your welfare!

Duke. Thy daughter! never!

Gaston. Bethink you, my lord! the odds are great!
A beggar to a Dukedom, with a wife!—
Methinks the difference much!—a Duke,
With power, wealth, dominion, at command,
Or to be cast out from this, give up all,
Sceptre and possessions, and where thou once
Didst rule, be governed! thy now nobles' scoff,
The rabble's bait and gaze of all Messina,
Yea, to be jeered and hooted through the streets
By the very men who now scarce think thee
Other than a god!—oh 'twere widely different!

Duke. Never! away! hence from me,
Or murder will heap ripe upon me! go!
Do thy worst! pluck from me this gilt circlet,
And take away this robe!—thou slave, begone,
And my curse go with thee! go to the world
And blazon me that I'm a bastard Duke!

Gaston. Patience, my lord!

Your choler does o'erreach itself, and blind
Your better judgment!—think but awhile
What do you gain by it, but stormy words,
Which in their deadliness harm their venter,
In drowning with their noise your better sense?
On me it idly falls, and as harmless
As the heedless, wanton wind! Go to then,
Stifle your rage, patience were better counsel!

Duke. Patience! such as thou would'st teach me,
To suffer thee to rob me with impunity,

Give thee my wealth, my lands, my all,
 To feed thy sieve-like avarice! oh hence!
 Go to the winds, command them how! no more,
 Cross the lightning in its path, or go brave
 The thunder's iron and bid the tempests hush,
 For sooner thou shalt have hear o' th' elements
 Than I will grant thee this!

Gaston. Nay, you do forget!—a beggar!
 Duke were better title!

Duke. Hence from my sight! begone,
 Or thou endanger'st life by staying!

Gaston. Farewell! your highness Duke to-day!
 To-morrow, farewell pomp and vanity!
 Farewell name and titles all!—

I go to make Lord Bertrand wise!

[*Exit.*

Duke. Farewell name and titles all! never,
 Long as a sword is girded to my side
 Or dagger's in my belt!—come murder, out,
 Nor be thou sheathed till I again do sit
 Firm in my seat!—thus will I do't to both,
 That I, by killing both, may gain two things,
 Alike the acme of my life's ambition!—
 So, after thee, thou serpent!

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The Country.*

Enter BERTRAND and ANTONIO.

Ber. How soon has morning come, Antonio!
 Methinks the half the allotted time of night
 Scarce past, ere the bright sun with envious haste
 Has risen upon our joys! Sweet, sweet night,
 Would that thy starry veil once more enshield us,
 And the bright moon again had lit her lamp
 In heaven's high arch, then would I to my love!—
 Antonio, this night has passed full soon!

An. Indeed, my lord, it does seem sadly short
 In being passed thus happily! so 'tis!—
 A moment's pain oft seems an age to live,
 When years of bliss do but a moment show;
 And were it not that nature's laws were true,
 I could but say this night had gone too soon!

Ber. 'Tis even so! yet by this light

Let us fulfil our promise to our loves,
Find out a priest, and be united quick
In wedlock's holiest bonds!

An. Here's some one comes this way, my lord!

Ber. It is Gaston! he must have something troublesome
To wake him from his bed thus early!

Enter GASTON, followed in distance by the DUKE.

Gaston. Give you good day, my lord!

Ber. What brings thee from thy couch
At this unseasoned hour?

Gaston. To meet with you, my lord!

Ber. Thy greeting must be urgent
To call thee forth thus early!

Gaston. Indeed it is, for I have that to tell
Which near concerns you, and must be instant told
Ere yet too late!

Ber. Thy words do breed an itching in my ear,
And wake my wonder and attention!—speak!

Gaston. Nay, my lord, this matter but affects yourself!
We must be private!

Ber. I understand thee!—
Leave me, Antonio! and hearken,
Hie thee to Friar Peter's cell, give him
My greeting kindly, and instruct him true
In our adventure, which he will follow;
Then haste thee with him to my lodgings,
Where abide my coming!

An. I will about it instantly! [Exit.]

Gaston. We are alone!

Ber. Yea, it is too early to have listeners!

Gaston. You know not all, but listen!—
And yet I scarce know how to frame my speech
That I may briefest be!—
It is about the Duke, your bastard brother,
I speak!

Ber. My bastard brother!

Gaston. Aye, your bastard brother! nay, rest you fair,
I come not without proof! see, here are those
Which prove him so!

Ber. Let me see them! [takes papers.]

Duke. [snatching them from him, and stabbing him]
They are mine! mine for ever!

Ber. Thou hast dearly earned them! [*falls.*]

Duke. Good Gaston! faithful secretary!
Thou hast done thy work, thy wage is due,
So take it! [*stabs him, who falls.*]

Gaston. Help! help! ho Antonio, help! [*swoons.*]

Duke. Call louder, he hears thee not!
Thou busy fool, such is the fee of meddling,
That he who works at strangers' stithies,
Must in every conscience hope a griming!
But let me see! aye, these, these are they,
So perish, all-opposing record
Of my greatness [*destroying papers*] thus will I set ye
free,

That ye may course the fickle winds, and learn
Each point o' th' compass in your wanderings!
But hark! some one comes, I must begone!
Poor fools! how like a scattered dove cot do
You lie, when the proud hawk hath been!—
And now for Grammont, and my love! [*Exit.*]

Enter FRIAR, ROGERIO, *and* ALICE.

Alice. 'Twas somewhere hereabouts, good father!
Hark!

Friar. It is the wind, child!—
Thou dost alarm thyself for nothing!

Alice. Nay, there was a cry for help!

Roge. [*seeing the bodies*] What here? father, this
way!

Friar. Oh, what's this I see?—
Does butchery wake so soon i' th' morn?

Alice. It is my father! oh help him!

Roge. And here another!

Friar. And one of rank! what! Lord Bertrand!—
Oh what a sight has this fair sun beheld,
Now no longer fair, but red with blood
Of guilty murder, cries aloud to heaven!
Come, help, Rogerio, let us bear them hence,
Mayhap we be not yet too late!—this way!

[*Exeunt* FRIAR, *bearing* BERTRAND, ROGERIO,
GASTON, *and* ALICE *following.*]

SCENE III.—*The Friar's Cell.*

Enter FRIAR and ROGERIO, bearing BERTRAND and GASTON, with ALICE following.

Friar. This way, good daughter, this way!

Alice. Oh holy father, much I fear 'tis o'er,
And I have lost a parent in this here!—
Yet no! he breathes! see, see, he lives! he lives,
Thank heaven!—good Friar, look to his wound!

Friar. Rogerio will tend thee, child!
Meantime I must attend me here,
For yet it seems the holy spirit hath
Not left its earthly tenement to soar
To yonder high and more congenial skies,
But hovers near, and seems in fitful mood
To hang, poised 'twixt earth and heaven, as if
Weary of its mortal pilgrimage,
And yet too fastly bound to scape the term
Destined by its Maker here to serve!

Gaston. [*surviving*] 'Tis useless! my thread of life
is spun

To its last hair!—but who art thou that thus
So like an angel ministers to my wants—
My child?

Alice. I am thy child, thy only child!
Thy daughter Alice!

Gaston. Thou art indeed, and yet thou art too good
To be a child of mine! Alas, poor girl!
Thou'lt soon be left alone without a friend,
And 'tis a barren prospect thus to live
Upon this desert earth!—nay, spare thyself,
It is a thankless office! thou canst not bid
The summoned spirit stay which God hath called!—
But where is Lord Bertrand? not, not dead!

Alice. Nay, I trust not!—
Yon holy friar tends him now!

Gaston. Go bid him here!

Alice. Good father, here!

[*FRIAR leaves BERTRAND to ROGERIO.*
Friar. What would'st?

Gaston. Come hither! [*taking papers out of his breast*] See, these papers which now I give to thee

I charge thee give unto Lord Bertrand there!

Friar. I will, should he get well again!

Gaston. He must not die! oh no, he must not die!

There is more virtue in his living than

Thou canst imagine! oh he must not die!—

But I faint!—Alice, my child, fare thee well!

'Tis hard to leave thee thus, but comfort thee,

There is in my coffers for thee much wealth

Which shall make thee rich!—be chary on't, tent,

For there be those who seek for 'fenceless maids

O'erburdened with such gear, to ease them on't;

So tent it as thy life, 'tis precious gold!

Thou hast it all, my gold, Alice! all, all!

That which has been the ambition of my life

To save, thou hast in one little hour!

Good father, see to thy charge, he dies not!

Alice, I have wronged thee, child! wronged thee!

Farewell! forgive me, Alice! [*dies.*]

Alice. Father, dear father, I do forgive thee!

Oh, he is dead, and hears me not!

Friar. Good daughter, be comforted!

Let not thy grief assume such violence,

But from the depths of thy affectionate heart

Make resignation to His will who rules

And governs all things, and take sweet patience

To thy aid, that thou may'st close the wound

Which rankles in thy bosom now so keenly!

Alice. I cannot! I have no aim in life from this

To bind me to the world! all, all is gone!

My young hopes and my old affections, all

Blasted in their bud!—oh vexed life,

That from the promise of so sweet a Spring

Should bring such bitter Autumn! quite, quite gone,

That from this hour I would not cherish e'en

So much as one poor bud of life to live

In this distracted heart! See, here is death!

Here where my duty from my childhood lays!—

How marble-like! how cold!—what vacant look

Sits on his death-dimmed eyes! their star-like spheres

No more shall 'lume their wasted fires, and gaze

As they were wont, but to the slimy worm
Give banquet in the earth!—oh, what a thought!
That man, proud man, should come to such an end!

Friar. Nay, let not thy thoughts dwell on such themes,
But fix their musings in the heavens above,
That thou may'st borrow comfort thence, and live
Secluded from the world in holy convent
Where I will place thee!

Alice. Oh no! 'twere better that this bruised heart
Should cease to beat, and rest from pain at once;
One grave to bury both, the father and the child,
The which shall be my convent of repose,
From all affliction free!—oh, break! break, heart!
Or if thou wilt not break, then will I thus
Sever the chord unites thee unto life! [*stabs herself.*]

Friar. Rash girl! what hast thou done?

Alice. Oh, blame me not! thou knowest not the thorns
Which rankle in this heart, else would'st thou pity,
Not condemn me! yet, holy Father,
Ere I die, I would receive thy blessing,
Then could I close these eyes in peace!

Friar. Benedicte! and may a pitying heaven
Look down upon thy deed, and bless thee too!

Alice. Thy words do soothe me, and sink into my soul
Like a last farewell, full of bright promise
That we shall meet again!

[*FRIAR kneels over her in prayer,
and scene ends.*]

SCENE IV.—*A Room in Grammont.*

Enter CONSTANCIA and MARGUERITE.

Mar. To-morrow, dearest cousin,
Are we to be married! on to-morrow!

Con. To-morrow! aye, to-morrow, joyful day!
I shall be Bertrand's wife!—oh, sweet, sweet thought,
To cast away my maid's simplicity
And don a wife's allegiance to my love!
What though the step be hasty ta'en, 'tis good
As quick, as slow, if 'tis worth the venture;
And surely love is, for 'tis the May of life,
Wherein all things are beautiful, where flowers,

Springing, rise up beneath our feet, and make
 The very air its sweetness to proclaim!
 No strife is here, nor envy, nor disdain,
 Nor aught that hate or malice can devise,
 But all accord in unity and peace,
 And blessings fresh, with every blessing, spring
 New into being! Oh, 'tis a happy state!
 To live one long and blissful term like this,
 Where, freed from worldly care, in snug retreat,
 Our life is spent in loving and being loved!—
 Nay, the greatest boon that God to man has ceded
 Is the consummation of a happy marriage!—
 It is the fairest of all earth's flowers,
 And sends an honest savour up to heaven,
 Welcomed and dear! and yet, despite it all,
 There's something hangs foreboding in my breast
 Which makes me sad again!—
 What thinkest?

Mar. That had I now again my word to give,
 I would not prove a laggard in the giving,
 But would as freely give it!

Con. That would I! When first I pledged my love
 I gave my heart into my love's keeping
 Without reserve! it was his for ever!—
 All thought, feeling, duty, and affection,
 Beat in my breast from thence for him alone!
 Yea, from that hour he was my lord and husband,
 And I looked upon him even as such;
 I could not take it back, and 'twere poor denial
 To refuse the hand, when the heart had gone
 In such a measure previous!—the set form
 Of matrimony is but the outward rule,
 Designed for fools and triflers, with which to bind
 Their fickle wills to constancy!—for us,
 And hearts like ours, it's needed not!

Mar. You say truly! but you forget
 We play our parts with men, and not with gods,
 And men are mortal, therefore is it needful!

Con. True, true! and yet methinks
 It was not made but for the incontinent!

Mar. Aye, good cousin, you are right again!
 But who are not so? Now, I, for my part,
 Would rather take the priest's homily on 't

Than a hundred vows of a lover!

Con. Oh, I would be sworn to Bertrand's truth!

Mar. So would we all, and there's the mischief!
We flatter ourselves into a constancy,
And straightway swear that all are true!

Enter CAIUS.

Con. Well, Caius, dost want us?

Ca. No, i' faith, I want you not, but there be those who do!

Con. And did that bring thee here?

Ca. Aye, marry, did it, at least so goes my mission;
and for the matter of that, there be more than one
want ye!

Con. Whip us not so hard, good Caius!

Mar. Nay, heed him not, he's but a fool!

Ca. Therefore should be more minded! Is not a
fool a state's scourge, a glass in which men see their
follies without flattery? but ye are women, and like all
others, would see yourselves in a favorite light!

Mar. If this is all thou can'st for, thou may'st go
back again!

Ca. Like a crab, no! I warrant you I'm no shell
fish, seeing I came into the world to advance myself,
not to go back again, for that were to go into nothing!

Mar. Thou art a shrewd fool!

Ca. Then hear me, and put a leaf of wisdom in your
books, and I will instruct ye on that which ye would
learn!

Con. What, I pray thee?

Mar. Aye, give us an index!

Ca. Love! and, to such as you, bearing sweet pre-
sage, and most beautiful argument!

Con. Thou would'st read us!

Ca. That's needed not, seeing you are read already,
and the world has turned your publisher!

Con. Tell us what thou makest of love?

Ca. Marry, nothing, excepting 'twere folly and le-
chery!

Mar. Then what is it?

Ca. Nothing still! for 'tis made up of contradictions,
and contradictions give the lie, therefore 'tis nothing!

Con. How so?

Ca. Why, simply thus:—'tis a cold heat, a pleasant pain, a bitter sweet, and its own bane; as when 'tis hottest is it soon 'st cold—bitterest, sweetest—and fullest pleasure, greatest pain!

Con. Thou art a keen satire, and I warrant has never loved!

Ca. There say you truly, but more the pity, as your true lover makes the best of fools, though a sploe too melancholy!

Enter Servant.

Ser. Your ladyship is wanted!

Ca. And much desired, which is old news! Prithee, friend, get thee to thy sender, and say it rained yesterday!

Con. Peace, sirrah!

Ca. Nay, my news is fresher o' th' two!

Con. Who is it, sir?

Ca. By cowl and cassock, I would guess in your health 'tis an embassy from Hymen!

Con. Peace, sirrah, and begone, I charge thee, on the pain o' th' whip!

Ca. A heavy charge, and one that brings tender recollections with it!

[Exit, rubbing his shoulders.]

Const. Now, sir, who is it?

Ser. One Rogerio, from Friar Peter!

Con. Bid him in!

[Exit Servant.]

Our lovers are in haste, good cousin!

Mar. A welcome to it!

But sec, here comes Sir Priest!

Enter ROGERIO.

Roge. Benedicite!

Con. Good Father, whence comest thou?

Roge. From Friar Peter!

Con. Comest thou to wed us?

Roge. Nay, no marriage errand have I come on!—
One more the look of death is 't brings me here!

Con. et Mar. Death!

Roge. My Lord Bertrand!—

Con. What? what of him? Speak!—
He hath not met with accident! nay, speak!—
Thy looks are torture!—he is not dead!

Roge. Not dead!

Con. Not dead!—thou say'st he is not dead!
 But thy words imply the horrid thought
 As much as if it were so!—oh, speak out!
 Tell me what brings thee here? thou see'st I'm calm!
 Thy silence is more horrible than aught
 Thou canst of ill proclaim and leaves the mind
 To jump at dire conclusion, so tell me!

Roge. This morning, as Friar Peter, myself,
 And mistress Alice, who had come for comfort
 To our cell thus early, were walking forth,
 We were alarmed with cries, and hastening on,
 The bloody forms of Gaston and Lord Bertrand
 Met our view! We quickly did examine them,
 And finding they still lived, bore them away
 Unto our cell, where we might tend their hurts!—
 Lord Bertrand still lives a doubtful living,
 But Gaston, he is dead!

Con. I will instantly after thee, good Father,
 So get thee back! [*Exit* ROGERIO.
 This way, cousin! come, help me to be gone!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Friar Peter's Cell.*

BERTRAND and FRIAR.

Ber. How tardy creeps the time, good Father!
It seems an age since Antonio went!
And since my love did not at first respond
To my desire, I fear foul play's afoot!—
So, prithee, let me go!

Friar. Thou must not think on't, for
Wert thou seen of any here, it might mar'
Thy present enterprise!

Ber. Nay, I will disguise myself in such wise
Not even my love shall penetrate!

Friar. Be patient, son! all will be well!
When otherwise, though mights destroy it,
How often men, to seek some sudden end,
Would burst all barriers, and be themselves
Their overthrow to fortune, when patience,
With proper care to chance, should lead them on
To the full tide of high prosperity!

Ber. Patience! patience! a lover has it not!
In love's vocabulary there's no such word!
He is all heat! passion! thirst! desire!
Full of hot fever! despatch and haste in all
Doing! e'er conceiving! with ambition
That pricks him to all end!
Oh, thou know'st not what thou speakest, good father,
When thou talk'st to me of patience!

Friar. Bear with me son! I do command thee
This once thou must not go!

Ber. Well, well! thou hast it!
I will content to sit me still and think,
And like a summer idler, twirl my thumbs,
And think again!

Friar. So, 'tis well! now let us hear thy plans!

Ber. Well thought! as I would have thy counsel,
Know then, that with this aid my uncle Duke
Shall send me from Palermo!

Friar. Thinkest he will send thee any?

Ber. I do feel certain on't! He was sponsor
For me at the font, and was ever kind,
And showed me much attention alway, as
Enquiring of me on all occasions
When chance did serve him, sending me at times
Some precious token of his memory;
And last, has oft invited me that I
Should make Palermo palace as my home,
And he would be a very father to me!

Friar. This were kindly said!

Ber. Said! 'twas meant and done,
And past the saying on't!—but to my plans:
With this expected aid I will assail
Messina's lofty walls at dead of night!—
But hark! some one comes! [*knocking*]
It is Antonio!

Friar. Who's there?

Roge. [*without*] 'Tis I—Rogerio!

Ber. Antonio were more welcome,
Though he do bring the best of tidings for me!

Enter ROGERIO.

Friar. Thou hast been true to thy time, Rogerio,
And quickly done thy task!

Roge. I did as thou didst bid me, Father!
See, here are my journey's fruits
For you, my lord! [*giving BERTRAND letters.*]
[*BERTRAND opens letter and reads.*]

Friar. How was thou received, Rogerio?

Roge. Most welcomely, good Father,
And like a noble, treated to the best
Whilst I was there! and when I came away,
They bade me use all speed, and gave me this
Full purse of ducats for my pains!—
Oh, 'tis a princely place!

Ber. [*hastily*] Give me joy, good Father!
Did I not tell thee he would succour me?
See here! he sends his forces to my aid,
And bids me meet them, when from thence they'll be

At my disposal! and more, he sends Costella,
His ablest general, and my schoolmate, Bellano,
With them! I must begone!
Yet I would Antonio were here, 'tis long
Since he did go!

Friar. Love's messengers should be made as swift
As lovers' thoughts that to their mistress fly!—
None else will please but such as quickest are!

Ber. It matters not, I must away!
So, pray thee, good Father, bid him meet me
A league westward o' th' city! Farewell!

[*disguises himself, and exit.*]

Friar. Heaven prosper thee, my son!
Rogerio, come thou with me, I shall want thee
Anon!

[*Exeunt FRIAR and ROGERIO.*]

SCENE II.—*The Country.*

Enter COSTELLA, BELLANO, Soldiers, &c.

Cos. MESSINA's walls are now in sight,
And this our rendezvous!—let us encamp,
And lay concealed in this thicket, there
Await Lord Bertrand's coming, when we yield
Our wills to his commanding, and bide
His furtherance in this matter!

Bel. Didst ever know, good general,
Lord Bertrand was my schoolmate,
The chosen of my youth? and in those days
Ere nature planted beards upon our chins
We were inviolate friends, but since age
Did summon us to manlier duty
I have not seen him!—
But who comes here?

Enter CAIUS, led between two Soldiers.

Ca. What mean ye, ye unmannerly knaves, to touch
a gentleman so roughly?

Sol. We found this fellow in the forest,
And fearing a discovery, have brought him here
To know your honour's will with him!

Ca. Friend, thou liest! thy master hath no will with
me!

Cos. Whence came ye?

Ca. Marty, from desire!

Cos. How, sirrah?

Ca. 'Tis even so; as had not my father had desire of my mother, I should not here have been!

Cos. Put up thy quips, and answer us discreetly!—
Who art thou?

Ca. Seest thou my baton? which is thy answer!—
But who art thou?

Cos. I am a soldier!

Ca. Then will we shake hands, I am a soldier too,
but with this difference of thee—thou warrest against
states, I against follies!—so, fare thee well! I must to my
mistress! [*going.*]

Cos. Not so fast! thou art my prisoner!

Ca. Prisoner! sayest thou?

Cos. Even so!

Ca. Thou art a mighty general, to make so great a
conquest! this deed shall be trumped of thy courage!

Cos. Hence with him!

Ca. Necessity hath strange companions!

[*Exit with Soldiers.*]

Cos. Bellano, see thou to the pickets,
That they be posted cautiously; the rest
Bid them seek some small repose, that they
Be better fitted for the night, should we
Be summoned in such haste!

Enter BERTRAND meeting BELLANO.

Ber. Bellano!

Bel. My lord!

Ber. This is a double joy to meet with thee
In this assistance!

Bel. I am glad to see your lordship well!—
But see, here is Costella, our general,
You have not greet him yet!

Ber. Forgive me, general!

Cos. In good time, my lord!

I do not wish you to forget old friends!

Ber. Nor new ones, either!—

But see, here comes Antonio, and in haste!

Enter ANTONIO.

An. Oh good my lord!—

The Duke has ta'en possession of your love,
Seized her person, and conveyed her hence!

Ber. Where?

An. To the palace!

Ber. Then will we on to-night!—

So hear my plans, and let me have your voice
In counsel of them, that no point may fail
Lacking your censures in this 'portant matter!—
When the concealing night shall dark the earth,
And spread her cloak in misty folds o'er all,
And the whole city in profoundness sleeps,
As 'twere secure from every lurking foe,
Will we unto Messina's lofty towers,
With velvet foot, and stealthy as the cat,
That the unconscious sentry be not waked
By our night marching! then will we sudden
Burst ope their city's gates, seize on the guard,
And with loud cry of 'Bertrand to the rescue,'
Pour our terror-charging troops throughout
The mazy labyrinths of the town,
Which shall strike wonder in the sleeping mass,
And gain us easy victory!—
What say you, Sirs?

Cos. There is no fear that it will act,
If it be done but stealthily!

Ber. That must be looked to!—

Meantime, as day is but half spent, 'twere best
The men were picketed and duly set,
That they may snatch some rest from their fatigue,
Lest night should find them wearied!

Cos. It shall be done!—

Bellano and myself will see to it!

Ber. Do, good general, and hold yourselves prepared
For momentary action!—

As for Antonio and myself,

We will draw nearer to the city walls,

And see what further 'vantage can be ta'en!

[*Exeunt COSTELLA and BELLANO.*]

This news affects me much, Antonio,
As I do fear my brother groweth strong
In desperation, and will stick at nought
To gain his damned purpose! for oh!
When men grow rash they overthrow all lets,

Preferring profit before honesty!—
 Would it were night! my thirsty soul does pant
 And strain within my heart to strike the blow
 For freedom and for love! Yon lofty towers,
 And their proud Duke that now frown upon us,
 Shall bend beneath our little band, so strong
 Are we in justice!

An. Your cause is mine, and should one fail,
 Then both do fail!

Ber. Fail! give but that word one thought,
 Be sure 'tis near at hand, therefore will we
 Banish it from our discourse and sentiments;
 For if we talk of failure before enterprise,
 Rest assured, when the testing hour shall come,
 'Twill stalk before us like a lated ghost,
 And fright our men of half their bravery;
 When otherwise they would forget such word,
 And fight more desperate!—but come, I see
 Thou didst not mean it in such wise as this;
 Let us draw nearer to the city! [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.—*A Dungeon in the Palace.*

CONSTANCIA, *solus.*

ALL is lost! my heart, like to my dungeon,
 Is fenced round with adamantine walls
 That bar the sun of my good fortune out,
 And leave it even as dark! and hope, sweet hope!
 That smiles on poor incarcerated felons
 And cheers them with its ray, from me has fled!—
 Oh dreary gloom! in thee my life is lost,
 And the ambition of my youth is wrecked
 In my sweet Bertrand's death! yet shall this soul
 With wings of heavenly mould mount on high,
 And soar above this body's wreck to Him
 From whence it came, and dwell with Him, and love!—
 Then, shall I fear the puny threats which hell
 Has put 'tween my tormentor's lips, when God
 Has endowed me with such spirit? no! no!
 I will not fear it, but in His will will trust,
 And bow to His commands, and henceforth pray!—

Sweet sorrow be my nurse and constant guest,
 To soothe me with its melancholy!—
 But hark! here comes my torturer!

Enter DUKE.

Duke. Sweet lady, I pray you do forgive this
 Seeming rudeness which I have used towards you,
 And if I may extenuate this wrong,
 Why, let me plead my love, for that alone
 Has led me to this forced measure!

Con. Thy love! can monsters such as thou
 Perjure so sweet a name? can so sweet joy
 Dwell in so black a case as thine? oh no!—
 If thou wast e'er possessed of but so small
 An atom of such sacred thing as love,
 'Twould purge thy grossness from thee, nor suffer
 Thee to be the inhuman wretch thou art!

Duke. Nay, frown not so upon me! that I love thee,
 I would 'fore every saint in heaven swear!

Con. Thou would'st forswear thyself in doing so!—
 Thou know'st not what's the meaning of true love,
 But garbles it with lust, so dost mistake
 It for the counterfeit thou hast!

Duke. Thou wrong'st me!

Con. Thou wrongest me, in daring thus to urge
 Such gross imposture on me!

Duke. I would not wrong thee, lady!

Con. Thou hast, else why am I confined here,
 Like some condemned felon, snatch'd from my home
 By stratagem and force, and hither brought
 To meet thy cursed ends?—oh fie! fie! fie!
 That thou, Messina's Duke, should come to this!—
 Thou, who should'st be example for all men,
 And guard thy honour keenly as thy life,
 Should'st suffer 't to be tarnished by such thing,
 And hold thyself hereafter for the scoff
 And gaze of petty men!—nay, not alone
 That thou hast wronged me, but more, thou dost,
 Else why here to torture with thy presence,
 Pushing this horrid suit upon me?—oh,
 I would rather be the meanest slave thou hast
 Than such a man!—but no! I will not shame
 The noble name of man in calling thee one!

Duke. Then will you not hear me?

Con. I have already heard too much,
More than I would, had I been free to act!

Duke. Yet hear me still! despite thy angry mood
I still will say I love thee, and have loved thee long,
Yea, from the first I saw thee, I did love thee,
And have since ever fondly cherished thy
Sweet image in my heart!—oh pluck 't not out,
Or 'twill bear with 't my life, being all to me
That I do hope or wish for in this life!—
So let me beg thou 'lt smooth thy angry brow,
Which is but as a summer shower that
Makes the face of nature shine more brightly
When 't has passed, and those scorning lips unbend,
Which scorn was never meant t' unshape those buds
That rival with the rose!—and then thine eyes,
Where now defiance sits, oh, oust it out,
And cast it from its throne, for 'twas not built
For it, but love! and if thou wilt,
My life shall be devoted to thy love!—
Wealth! titles! power! all, all are thine!

Con. Thy wealth, thy titles, power, and thee, alike
I spurn, as 'neath my notice! What are they?
Or what art thou, that thou dost offer them?—
Alas! to be the queen and empress
O' the world, and reign with thee, were misery!—
Oh, go to! you should be shamed, my lord,
To bait a 'fenceless woman thus!

Duke. Nay, then, if thou wilt not hear my suit,
But will continue in this scornful strain,
I must perforce use sterner means, and see
What threats can do! Ah, ah! thou startest now!—
Thy cheek is blanched! beware!

Con. I fear thee not! Thou may'st threaten still,
Bring in thy torturous engines, pinch my flesh,
Rend me on the rack, or devise aught else
Malice or lust can aid thee to, thou fiend!—
I spit on thee and all thy arts, and know
None are so vile but thou may'st father them!

Duke. Fearest not death?

Con. Death! oh, instant, prithee, lead me to it,
And thou shalt see how I will kiss it, for
All must die! and if I now do die by thee,

I'll count it mercy! yea, I will bless thee,
 And say thou showedst me love indeed, so
 Teach me how to 'scape this loathsome life!—
 For what do I fear of death, seeing all
 I hoped for in life is dead before me?

Duke, Poor fool!—

Thou hast first to feel the triumph of revenge,
 And shalt! Once I did woo thee honourably,
 Would have call'd thee wife, and raised thee
 To the one-half my throne, for I loved thee,
 But thou spurned alike my offer and my love
 With scorn, which scorn rain'd venom in my heart,
 And turn'd my love to gall, and where was peace
 Usurps a tyrannous hate more fell
 And dire towards thee, and shalt learn how deep
 That scorn has sunk within my soul, where yet
 It keenly rankles, making all hell within!—
 Nor scorn! defiance! hate! or aught canst wield
 Upon thy tongue shall stay that bell against
 For I have banished all soft weakness from me,
 As dew-eyed pity and its neighbour sympathy,
 Which erst might bar my purpose, for by all
 In hell or earth, thou shalt be mine—
 And I have sworn it!

*Con. Thou darest not! Even here,
 Poor and dejected though I am,
 I defy thy threats! yea, though a prisoner,
 Barr'd from the world, still I fear thee not!—
 What! dost think I fear a coward guilty man?—
 Oh heaven, preserve me from so mean a thing!*

*Duke. Thou soon shalt learn how much I dare!—
 The scorn upon thy lips shall turn a curse,
 I'll heed it not, but in my wanton love
 Shall be revenge enough upon thy hate,
 To pay the grudge I owe thee! Go weep then,
 For I'll no pity take to see thy woes,
 But will exult me in thy virtue's fall!—
 E'en as you laughed when I did offer love,
 So let those laugh who win!—now I will smile!*

[lays hands on her.]

Con. Unhand me, ruffian! oh help! help!

*Duke. Thy cries avail thee not! there are none here
 Would dare so much as listen to them!—*

Thou art mine! ah! ah!

Con. [*seizing his dagger from his belt, and breaking away*] Never!—so long as life and body holds
Within this frame, will I be aught of thine!—
Nay, stir but one foot, this thirsty steel
That instant drinks my blood, and opes the gates
Of death to aid my soul's escape!

Duke. Didst think I'd harm thee? nay,
My love it is too strong in purity!—
Thou knew'st me not!

Con. Purity! the very word doth change its sense
In falling from thy lips!—oh shame! shame! shame!—
Messina's Duke to come to this! the pride
And pattern of thy city thou should'st be!—
An honour and an ornament to virtue!—
Example of all good, a moral precedent,
And all that is most dignified and great
In man's nobility!—but, the reverse of this,
Thou dost disgrace thyself in all of these!—
The glass of thy morality is sullied
With excess!

Duke. Still railing!

Con. Where is thy brother?

Duke. Where thou would'st have him!

Con. How?

Duke. At peace in heaven!

Con. Alas!

Duke. Dost cry alas! to know thy love's in heaven?
Nay, rather cry 'tis well!

Con. Out on thee, for his murderer!—
Thou art a villain! a Cain-fingered villain!—
A thief to rob him of his love! a liar,
That mock'd him with fair speech, and then, oh base!
When he would show thee love, didst murder him!—
The meanest rogue in Sicily could not,
In all his villainies, boast one so black!—
Sure thou art no man, but fiend, that could act
In such a blood-thirst manner to thy kin,
Or, being man, the very dregs of manhood!

Duke. Call on! I push'd thy love from earth,
And sent him post to heaven, and for this—
I am thus answered!

Con. Oh heavy woe! yet ne'er were woe

But there was remedy, and herein mine!

[makes attempt to stab herself, but DUKE rushes to her, and wrests the dagger out of her hand.]

Duke. Ah, ah! safe, and mine again!—

Now, by hell, let wanton purpose out,

Thou shalt be mine for e'er!

[is dragging her off, when guns heard without, and shouts of triumph.]

What's that? *[going to door]* sure!—no! yet what means it?

Hallo there, within!—what! no one answer?

Ho, ho, there!—yes! here some one comes!—

Who's there?—ha!

[BERTRAND, ANTONIO, and Soldiers rush in.]

Con. Bertrand!

Ber. Love! *[they embrace.]*

Duke. Foiled!—but no! this shall baffle all!

[makes attempt to stab BERTRAND, when ANTONIO rushes at him with his sword, and kills him.]

Oh! my everlasting curse upon thee!—

Rebellious dog! *[falls.]*

Ber. What act is this?

An. My lord, to save your life!

Duke. Oh for a moment's strength! but no! 'tis past! *[dies.]*

Ber. I would thou hadst not harmed him,

But retribution is in heaven's hands,

Man but its instrument!—but see! who comes?—

Thy love and Caius! alas! a medley pair,

Beauty and folly, and not the first time

Is it beauty has leaned on folly's arm!

Enter MARGUERITE and CAIUS.

Ca. Ah! *[seeing the body]* is't not as I told you?
we have missed the sport!—finis est!

Ber. Silence, thee!

Ca. Said I not—finis est?

An. Sweet Marguerite, my love, thou'rt mine!

Mar. Not till the priest has bound us!

Ca. Pray God!—no! for that were sinful!

Con. Dearest cousin!

Mar. I do congratulate you, Constance,
And you, too, my lord!

Ca. Not till the priest has bound you, either,—
And here he comes to do 't!

Enter FRIAR PETER, Citizens following.

Ber. Welcome, holy Father!

Friar. Thou hast my blessing, son!—
But what is this I see?—Ferdinand dead!
Who was the Duke! and you triumphant!—
So shall my story be the shorter for 't,
And hearken, all! yet first hail Lord Bertrand Duke!
[*shouts, long live DUKE BERTRAND.*

He whom you see lies here outstretched in death,
And whom you knew as ruler o' this city,
Was not the lawful Duke, being not lawful born
In wedlock, as here are proofs to show!—
Therefore a bastard, did usurp the crown,
Which was Lord Bertrand's better right;
The which proclaim throughout Messina,
That therefore may the rabble be appeased
To the outrage done this city, and so learn
Their future lord and ruler!—away!

[*Exit Citizens, shouting long live the DUKE!*
long live DUKE BERTRAND!

Ber. And, ere we part, let me give thanks
To such have kindly helped me to my right!—
To you, good generals, who besides skill
Lent valour equal to work out your plans;
And you, brave men, so well have borne the brunt,
And nobly back'd us—I do give my thanks!
More unto all I cannot, lacking means,
Yet rather let my future rule to all
Prove how I now do thank them!—
Meantime, a lesson from this picture learn;—
Ill deeds ne'er thrive, but to their sire return;
And whoso love by evil act would gain,
Shall learn no end but his—who here is slain!
[*curtain falls.*

THE END.









